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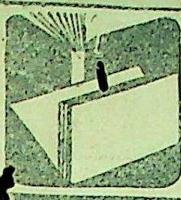
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Speaking
Volumes



India, like other parts of the former empire, has had a special relationship with Penguins.

LITERARY sentimentalism is as sloppy as any other kind but some slippiness is surely not uncalled for during Penguin's golden jubilee celebrations throughout the world. Penguins have meant so much to so many people in so many countries that there has been a sort of outpouring of "Penguin memoirs" in which every conceivable note of literary nostalgia has been unerringly struck. This could not be a more effective stimulus to such indulgence than the neat and handsome facsimile edition of *Ariel* by André Maurois, this being number one of the first 10 Penguins abroad which are available in a book set for Rs. 261.63. These were indeed very mixed fare ranging from Hemingway to Linklater to Dorothy Sayers, Agatha Christie and Compton Mackenzie, designed to appease the 50s as in "earnest" reading. It was a mix of literacy and the sophisticated, of which it led far outpaced the lower middle class culture to pay for books and magazines.

Earlier Penguin editions, including the beautiful cloth-bound Schachtz editions, were no less than cheaper reproductions of covers. Penguins were not only cheaper but distinctly aristocratic in giving popular writers a certain respectability they had never had before. Later came a high proportion of the privileged by assuming they were interested in serious things; and the phenomenal success of the enterprise suggests that from the 50s onward it was a regeneration that was well under way.

In A Nutshell

EMMA HARDY DIARIES: edited by Richard Taylor (Carcanet/MidNag, £14.95).

IN her travel diaries Emma Thomas Hardy's first wife emerges as an Englishwoman who could rise to any occasion. In 1887, in Rome, when three men in the street attempted to rob her husband, she chased them off; in the Forum when she found herself persistently pestered by a shoe-blacker, she took her umbrella to him and broke it across his shoulders.

These incidents, which occurred when she was 46, are reported in the third of the four diaries now

more than the first 10 Penguins. The Penguin New Writing edited by John Lehmann and Roy Fuller, consisting of selections from the well-known series, is evocative of an intellectual excitement much of the flavour of which did not survive the end of the war.

Yet by skilful adaptation and inventiveness, while retaining something of its '30s note, Penguins continued to dominate the paperback field; and if its golden jubilee is a looking back it is also as much a looking forward in a way of which Allen Lane himself would have fully approved. This latter applies in part to India where Indian Penguins are about to be launched. India, like other parts of the former empire, has had a special relationship with Penguins. There are probably more preserved, yet carefully preserved, copies of old Penguins than anywhere else; and anything that promotes the highest literacy is truly welcome.

Nevertheless one wonders anxiously whether Penguins are not being too optimistic in assuming that 12 titles of the right sort will be available every year, even including translations from originals in the Indian languages. Moreover, if an English original by an Indian author is worthy of the Penguin imprint would he not prefer publication in England? Or have we here the beginnings of an enterprise which will later include Penguins in the major Indian languages?

Doubt And Belief

Novels heavily weighted with period detail are immediately suspect but when the detail, selected and authentic, is deliberately presented and used accumulatively as a means of far more powerful effect the novelist can produce in any other way. A. N. Wilson's *Matthew in England* (Hodder Hamilton, £9.95) adopts this technique in a recreation of the Victorian world to provide a setting for investigation of the nature of doubt and belief. The mass of period documentation re-

published for the first time under the title of the *Fauna Hardy Diaries*. The other three were written when she was 33, 35 and 66 respectively and provide vivid accounts of her stays with her husband in France, Germany and Switzerland. That only four of her diaries have survived is because Hardy destroyed the rest after her death on the ground that the abusive and critical portrait which they presented of him was "sheer hallucination". In this decision he had been supported by his second wife Florence, who had never liked Emma, and who earlier had set going the rumour that she came of unstable stock and that more than one of Emma's relatives had been confined in a lunatic asylum.

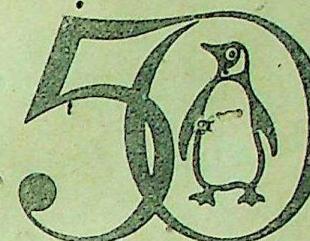
Judging however from these surviving diaries, Hardy could have little complaint about the

some lines from one:

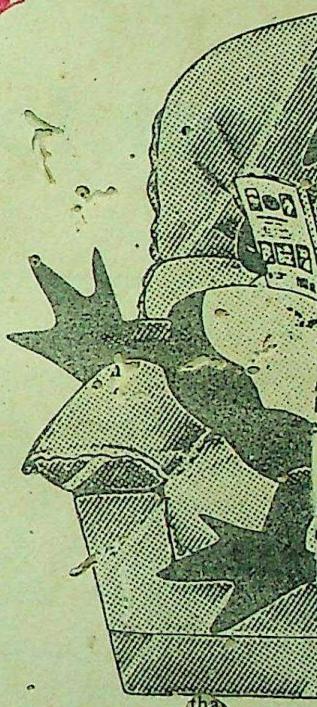
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Our days were a joy, and

lating to food, furniture, houses, gardens, servants, entertainment, clothes, education and so on generates an ambience of solidity, is an conviction, final definitions, and establishment. In short it is the Critique context in which belief not so much flourishes but is enshrined. But, of course, doubt was never defeated; and it is the growth of other disharmony which Wilson charts in *unumism*. Djilas's novel that seemingly both Djilas's moods and regrets the Victorian story, presumptions.

Nothing could have been more improbable in the Victorian con-



Fifty Penguin Years



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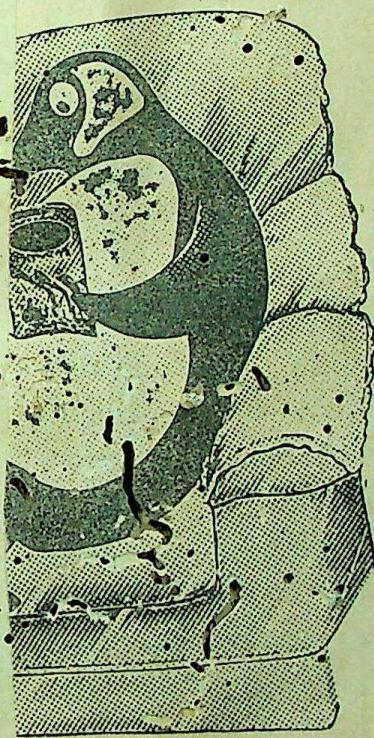
SUCH a book is bound to be unpredictable. Was this loss of belief a promise of emancipation? Unimportant? A tragedy? A cause of hilarity? Wilson does not say but underlying the mockery, laughter and even contempt for Victorian hypocrisy is the suggestion that a capacity to believe is a useful thing to have for a stable and civilized society; and that disbelief, though ostensibly liberating, is a recipe for drift and chaos in both private and public worlds. This novel is the familiar story of the god that failed but without the communism.

an autobiographical commentary on the revolutionary process. Criticism of communist regimes by communists has been denounced on the one side as blasphemy and acclaimed on the other as absolutist hostility to communism. Among other things Djilas's works, and notably his life story, demonstrate that it is possible to be neither.

At one level this book is the story of a sensitive, dedicated and sincere man and of what happens to him in a communist society. But at another it is enlightened communism asking questions about itself. In repudiating the dogmatism of communist society Djilas himself is a part of an internal evolutionary process some evidence of which is already to hand in the Soviet Union and China. A revolutionary is saved by his inner conflicts; and those of Djilas, as of other dissidents, possibly add up to a blueprint of the communist future as yet undreamt of by the ideologues in Washington. If there is an acceptable face of communism this book is surely it.

Communist Vs. Communist

Communist dissidents who are also distinguished thinkers and writers have often had the humiliation of being "adopted" and exploited by the professionally extreme ideologues of the West. The distinction between dissidence and rejection is rarely recognised though it is surely crucial,



fact, just before her death in 1912, she printed privately two small books—one a collection of her verses, the other a collection of her religious thoughts: her intention was to counter Hardy's pessimism with Christian hope. It is noticeable in the last two diaries that, although she never ceases to be a caring wife, there is a cooling off of her affections. A fortnight before the final diary ends, an entry reads: "Breakfast and out before T.H."

If the marriage resulted in considerable strains on both sides, especially in the closing years, then Emma's death, and the grief and guilt that it caused to Hardy, inspired also some of his most moving love poems. Here are some lines from one:

I am just the same, as when
Our days were a joy, and

Last Of The Breed

In their day the British bred a species of general which can best be described as a British version of McArthur, autocratic, irascible, dogmatic, disciplinarian, plain spoken, and benevolent so long as he got his way. They were useful people to have around when the empire was being run; and Templer, perhaps the last of the breed, was useful enough in Malaya before it was handed over. Templer: Tiger of Malaya by John Cloake (Harrap £14.95) perhaps strikes a high hagiographic note but is nevertheless a faithful portrait of a species familiar in former India. Templer's contribution to pacifying Malaya was arguably not as successful as his supporters, including Cloake, make out. Yet the fascination of the character lies in its being so true to itself and in the period to which he belongs. Odd that a man who called the Malays cowards should be seen as having a claim to their regard as their "liberator".

NJN

our paths through flowers...

On their honeymoon Empress had listed in her diary the flowers on sale in the Paris streets; in the Garden of the Tuilleries she had noted how the fresh green leaves of roses grew round the darker older ones. The birds chattered in them.

Often her sentiments expressed in the diaries are uncannily similar to his. There are occasions when she might almost be a character from a Hardy novel. In Italy, looking at some of Fra Angelico's paintings, she remarks that the haloes on the angels remind her of "straw hats, put on because they were out of doors". Tess of the d'Urbervilles might have had just such a reaction.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

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FAR FROM THE MADDING COURT: A Prince in a Garden, Deccan, 1670-80.

It was a rejection of the pragmatic and a preference for whatever conduced to reflection and reverie; and in this, as in its colour, exuberance and fantasy, it is a recognisable departure from the formalism of the Mughal mainstream.

by N. J. Nanporia

OCCASIONALLY in the history of art appreciation there is a sudden quickening of the eye, an unexpected responsiveness to line and colour, and a grasp of subtlety that had escaped it in the this way a new painterified, a new style is revealed, unsuspected influences are uncovered, attributions are reassessed, and the distinctive traits of a new school are established. It is a kind of cultural detective work, as exhilarating as any exercise in exploration and discovery.

Zebrowski's Deccani Painting is a splendid example in this genre, a highly persuasive contribution to the history of Indian miniatures, stamped by a most impressive quality of aesthetic analysis. Zebrowski was a member of the American Peace Corps serving near Hyderabad who, like many of his kind, wanted to "break through" to the "real India". This does not sound too promising but in his case the outcome has been infinitely rewarding as much for him as for all those enraptured by the world of Indian miniatures. Some specimens in the Salar Jung Museum set him on his course of relating influences, styles, techniques, mannerisms, and courtly fashions to one another; and what we have, in the result, is the most definitive presentation of the painterly qualities that have, since the early 1930s, come to be more firmly known as the Deccani school of miniatures.

These paintings were in the main produced for the Deccani sultans south of the Vindhya mountains during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unlike northern India the Deccan is relatively less documented, and the

The private world of pages and princes

milieu from which the paintings emerged can in most cases be approximately reassembled only from the internal evidence in the paintings themselves. This Zebrowski has done with an enthusiasm to which few readers can fail to respond. The sultanates of Bijapur, closely related to the Safavids of Iran, as against the Sunnis of Mughal India. Their distinctive theme was one of personal cultivation and the cultural elevation of leisure somewhat in the manner depicted in the Japanese eleventh century novel *Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki.

Love, Music, Poetry

This was a life of "quiet abandon" to the joys of love, music, poetry, or just the perfume of a flower. It was remote from the pomp of empire, conquest, and historical achievement; and nearer to an intense concentration on the lyrical evocation of the moment, however fleeting. It was a rejection of the pragmatic and a preference for whatever conduced to reflection and reverie; and, in this, as in its colour, exuberance and fantasy, it is a recognisable departure from the formalism of the Mughal mainstream. This, then, is a portrait of what can aptly be called the Deccani atmosphere, a profile of the private world fostered in the three kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda.

Doubtful attributions since 1930 have spoken tentatively of the "work of the Deccans" but stopped short of postulating a definable style, still less an original

mentation has left the three Deccani kingdoms surrounded if not obscured by a mystery by which the miniatures and their painters also have been magically touched. Appropriately, the four principal Bijapuri artists are identifiable only in terms of the stylistic differences which Zebrowski's analytical dissection has brought to the surface.

Similarly the subjects are anonymous in that public occasions such as the hunt, the court ceremonial or the religious ritual are avoided in favour of the private moment or rather the private world of "pages, princes, dervishes and mullahs" nurtured in the very special cultural compost of the Deccan with its settlements of Indian Hindus, Muslims, Turks, Persians, Arabs and Africans. Zebrowski does not strain credulity when he claims that in the Deccani miniatures we have South Indian visions of Iran, a nostalgic yearning for a lost world. Neither wholly south Indian nor Iranian it is an intriguingly hybrid culture supported by an underlying Indian humus.

There is in it a large element of fantasy and distortion, much as though the Deccani vision strove to penetrate beyond the literal precision of no more than a polished technique. Playfulness, zest, shapes for shapes sake, tumultuous colour, high emotional content, spatial illogicality, and alternating lyricism and power are some of the ingredients in this cultural hot pot. All of which release a vitality and a mood that is unmistakably Deccani and

Abul Hasan when Aurangzeb's forces stormed Golconda and rushed to the sultan's chambers. They found him there calmly seated. He invited them to break fast which he was about to begin and explained that pain and pleasure must be accepted with detachment as gifts from God. God had first made him a beggar, then a king and now he was back to being a beggar. This pessimist swagger not untouched by humour, and an intensified appreciation of the moment are at the heart of the Deccani philosophy under the sultans; and it is one that ties it with the Safavids of Iran, the Turkmen artists, Central Asia, China and the far East.

Two Cultures

Necessarily, the stress in Zebrowski's account is on distinguishing between the Mughal and Deccani civilizations, and on liberating the second from the first where a failure in discrimination in the past has confused one with the other. As he says the Mughals were passionate recorders of worldly phenomena, encouraged historiography and factual reportage, narrative and precise portraiture. Deccani culture was at the opposite end of the pole to all these things, mobilising poetic fantasy and sometimes even rollicking humour to create and capture a moment of feeling and then to communicate it among the company of well bred people.

Sometimes there was a deterioration into escapism, but such a relapse was no more than the other side of the coin to the emotionally charged observation of the Deccani scene, with an uncertain line between the real and the bizarre. Little surprise that Deccani paintings formed part of Rembrandt's portfolio of Orientalia and that long before definitive identification they had an undefinable fascination for connoisseurs throughout the world. Altogether this is a stimulating and valuable work, sumptuously packaged and textually of a standard appropriate to what was first Sotheby publication, and well worth every rupee of the five hundred and fifty that is asked for it.

Deccani Painting : By Mark Zebrowski (Roli Book International, Rs. 550)

outlook on life and living. The sorting out and tidying up which Zebrowski has so fruitfully undertaken now gives us a coherent picture of a civilization and culture that has so far not been appreciated in its own unique terms. The new ground which this book has broken consists of the first-ever systematisation of the Deccani qualities that add up to a wholly new aesthetic idiom. The paucity of historical docu-

greatly enriches our sensibilities in a turbulent sort of way.

One particularly formative early influence seems to have been Central Asian or Chinese: in faces, clouds, line, body rhythms and an underlying strength, as for example in plate 14, a dervish, plate 68, crouching dervish, plate 102, dervish and cat, and plate 179, courtesan. This inner strength has something in common with the known by

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Once again N. J. Nanporia brings a refreshingly original approach to an apparently familiar subject — Forster's Passage To India. He rejects the stereotype into which the Passage is being fitted partly as a result of the nostalgia for the Empire which appears to have caught or attacked the British. This itself makes his article interesting; in fact it is not only interesting, it is provocative. The author asks us not to read into the Passage what it does not contain.

Indo-British relations were too complex to have been summed up in one relatively slim fictional work; neither in the Passage nor in any other work. Certainly not in Far Pavilions nor in The Raj Quartet.

No British novelist in our times has written on the scale of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky. And no single work even by those masters can be said to have summed up 19th-century Russia.

by N. J. NANPORIA

SIX decades after it was published Forster's Passage to India is being examined with the concentrated attention usually conceded to those novels that are being filmed. One salutes David Lean's problematic apotheosis of the book by re-reading it which one would not normally do since it belongs to the category of works that are dutifully respected but are otherwise ignored. Along the way it has been certified as a "political novel", an outstanding literary work, a quintessential expression of the British liberal spirit, an illuminating inquiry into the enigma of Indo-British relations, one of the pinnacles of Forster's achievement, and a definitive tract on the theme of anti-imperialism. Yet the cumulative gathering of these tributes from the faithful has not prevented the intrusion of doubt.

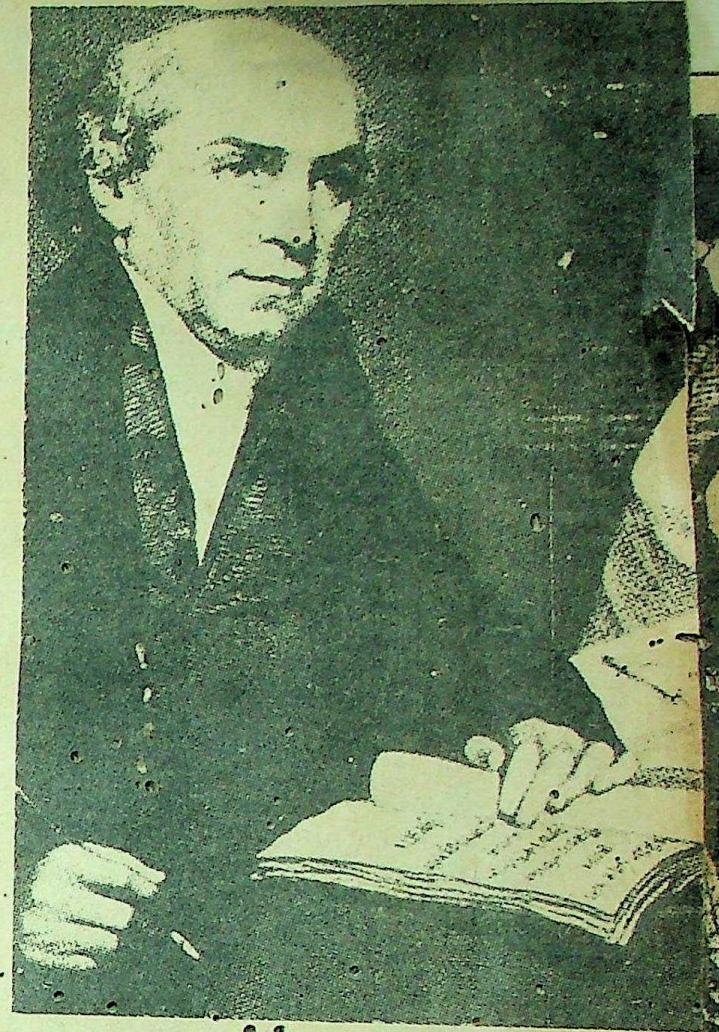
Thirty years after the event there is the advantage of hindsight, but time has only placed in greater and increasing relief the crudities, the simplicities and the caricatures that were relatively unnoticed in 1924. The point, for example, that the Passage is not a political novel is more easily grasped today than in earlier years. The dilemmas of the Fielding-Aziz world are the outcome of an infinitely larger political-cum-sociological situation which Forster barely notices. His concern is with the first rather than with the second, with the area in which the Forsterian concept of "personal relationship" can be firmly rooted, and the wider movements of history, of an India more comprehensive than Chandrapore, of a defiance less puny than that of Aziz can be ignored or hinted at but are never confronted.

There is consequently no evidence in the novel of a burgeoning independence movement, of a progressively sophisticated political and social challenge to the British presence and of an Indian capacity for self-rule. This bigger canvas was outside Forster's miniaturist's scope with its involvement with the personal and deliberate evasion of the impersonal. But this was not simply a limitation of perspective. It is a foisting on detail of a unity which properly belongs to an expanded context. The person was expected to bear the burden of the impersonal.

The line that separates the

In an article in the Nation and Atheneum two years before Passage appeared Forster commented: "Never in history did ill-breeding contribute so much towards the dissolution of an Empire". This artificial causation between ill-breeding at the level of the human being and the reverberation of a disintegrating empire is the 'inbuilt improbability' that runs through the Passage, a great many of Forster's Indian letters, diary entries, and incidental commentaries. On board ship on his first voyage to India he takes note of an Englishwoman who says "If our children stop in India they get to talk chintz and it is such a stigma"; and of another who says "a propos" an isolated Indian passenger, "They tell me the young Indian's lonely. I say he ought to be. They won't let us know their wives, why should we know them?" Of shipboard women he says "they are pretty rotten" and notes that when he tells his苔 neighbour that he is going to stay as a native, there is a hoisted gasp.

He dines with a collector and his wife and they never stop talking about how they despise the natives; and in the Passage



Into For

the intensity of his pre-occupation with it seems to be such that it excludes everything else, including the perception that private boorishness was an offshoot of a public maladjustment known as imperialism. True, Aziz says that when the British get out he and Fielding can be friends; but this is not Forster's message as it emerges when the novel is related to his philosophy. It is rather that friendship or the mysterious qualities of a rapport between individuals can transform and in-

ing officer and well-intentioned administrator provided the acceptable face of imperialism. Legends about these people sprinkle the history of Anglo-India and are responsible for many of the private Indian memories that keep alive a consciousness of the British connection. But when Mr. Haq, the inspector of police, arrives to arrest Aziz under instruction from his British superiors and refuses to disclose what the charges are, Fielding says sharply: "Don't answer me like that". What does this tartness imply? First, that no Indian, policeman or otherwise, has any business not to oblige a white man, liberal or conservative. Second, that however objectionable the ill-breeding of the imperialists is they as well as the Fieldings are in India for "her own good". Third, that the mission of the Fieldings is to make the less tolerable aspects of imperialism as palatable as possible in a spirit of individual good fellowship. How otherwise can one explain the Fielding remark that Indians outside the range of British influence immediately "go to seed". How to accommodate Forster's own comment that what Indians need is not education but character, the touch of the scoutmaster that has always flawed the British liberal's position on India? And when silly little Aziz is made to say: "Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need" he is echoing Forster's journal entry a propos an English clergyman in India whose popularity suggests "how readily Indians respond to kindness and how incapable they are of distinguishing good European manners from bad."

This, then, is the reductio ad absurdum. Hence, part three of the novel, the temple and fest-

Continued

there is the racial snub, the scarcely veiled contempt, the bigotry, the prejudice made all the more repellent by being contained within the framework of a public schoolboy's ideas of fair play. There was a way of keeping the native in his place without being "caddish", and this psychological acclimatisation took place within two years for the Englishman and six months for the Englishwoman exposed to the pressures of Anglo-India.

The subject of the Britisher's nastiness to the Indian was of course less documented and sensitive an issue in Forster's day than it became subsequently. Yet

indeed justify the British presence. Ill-breeding is destroying an empire and he regrets both the ill-breeding and the loss. Have we not here a rather fussy, old-maidish concern with behaviour, the feeble plea for private decency so that the public ugliness can be kept at bay and indeed need not be mentioned at all?

Plainly, Fielding is the character with whom Forster most closely identifies, the compassionate, understanding liberal, the champion of the ill-treated against his own kind, the tolerant, patient do-gooder who as missionary, school-master, benevolent employer, social worker, jawan-befriend-

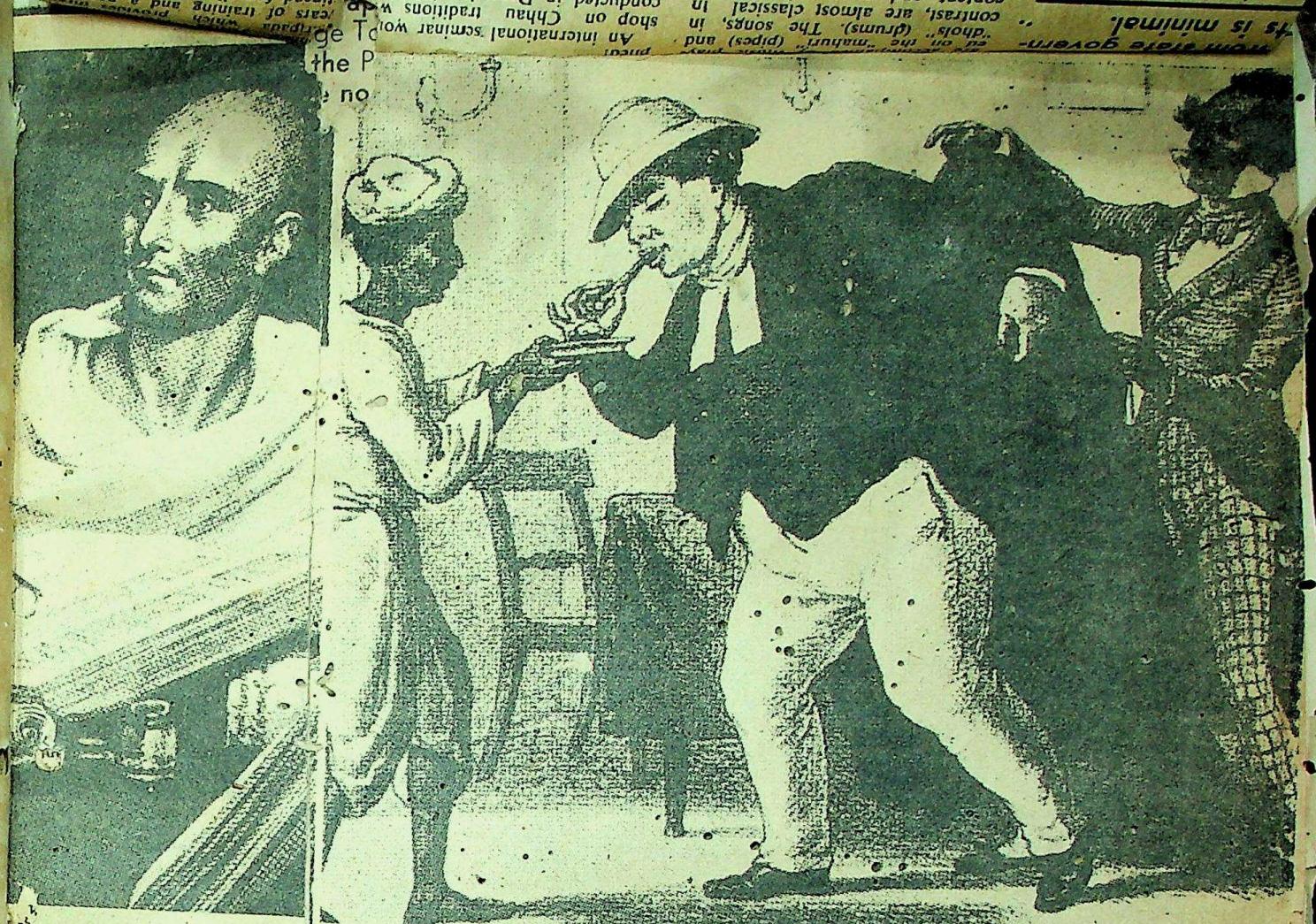
er, the former remittance man, applicable alike to Muslim and Hindu, was an option in favour of the "unspoilt" Indian,

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Fielding-Forster's India Again

absurdum of Passage, a submission for kindness, an argument for charity and tolerance, and none at all for respect, or the concession of any dignity to the Indian side. Little wonder that the Indian characters are vacuous, petulant, petty, sometimes overly conscious of their "national cult", sometimes eagerly imitative of the West, sometimes fawning, sometimes fatuously defiant, seemingly

This, then, is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Passage, a submission for kindness, an argument for charity and tolerance, and none at all for respect or for the concession of any dignity to the Indian side.

"emancipated" yet intermittently superstitious. They are a sad, despicable lot whom Ronny, the "hand-to-be of Adela, dismisses as "spoilt westernised" which is rather odd judgment on westernisation by a westerner. But here ster is at one with Ronny, for ring up against a "public sol Indian" he chillingly describes him in his journal as her trying.

The line that separates the Fielding-Forsters from the Ronnies is even more difficult to trace

when we ask why, in the world of Fielding-Forsters, there is a predominance of Muslims and no more than the most hesitant echoes of Hindu India. This preference, obvious throughout the British connection, was of course a commentary not so much on the Hindu or Muslim as on the muddled complexities of the British character in the Indian context. The presence of mind of the British in India ("at a crisis the English are really unequalled" says Hamidullah), their seeming nonchalance, confidence, white tribal solidarity and so on were offshoots of a deep-seated sense of insecurity, all the more felt for being never expressed in real life. Forster expresses it in Passage when he describes the rather peccy reactions of the British community to the tensions created by Aziz's arrest. This inconsistent contempt for and fear of the Indian "mass" was compounded by a rejection of anything not explainable in the simplest rational terms, anything as infuriatingly elusive as the Hindu mind which could be suspected of unravelling the hidden motivations that lurked behind the facade of British hypocrisy.

If the average Englishman, liberal or die-hard, did not think this, he felt it. The former sought refuge in picturing Indians as children, not without lovable foibles, but in need of character training. The latter believed in firm rule or worse. But both, in the face of Hindu and Muslim, opted for the second as more graspable, more extrovert and therefore approachable even if hostile. A further refinement of this preference, applicable alike to Muslim and Hindu, was an option in favour of the "unspoilt" Indian,

The line that separates the Fielding-Forsters from the Ronnies is even more difficult to trace, when we ask why, in the world of Fielding-Forsters, there is a predominance of Muslims and no more than the most hesitant echoes of Hindu India.

the "raw" version with those instinctive qualities of loyalty, devotion, and sense of service which were the ingredients of a simplistic British cult. On this point Forster wrote in his journal about a British member of the ICS that he "protected syots" but hated "any class that can criticise him." The Englishman wanted a one-way traffic in understanding from him to the unspoilt Indian, and none in reverse. He need not fear any from the unspoilt Indian or the relatively more pragmatic Muslim mind, impatient of this kind of analysis. But he had reason to fear what went on in the Hindu mind, and this held good as much for Fielding as for Major Callender, Turton and Ronnie.

Aziz, the Passage says, "liked soldiers — they either accepted you or swore at you which was preferable to the civilian's hau-teur" and when he meets a British subaltern on the maidan he has a comrade chukker with him and shares "a fire of good fellowship". A case of the unspoilt Englishman meeting a near-unspoilt Muslim Indian and between whom is sparked a spontaneous responsiveness without the intervention of nationality or the

complications of ruler and ruled. An unlikely thing to have happened but a declaration, we might say, of Forster's abiding interest in the personal equation; and his abhorrence of Hindu "inscrutability". Fielding says to himself "no eye could see what lay at the bottom of the Brahman's mind", and Forster himself says much the same in the structure of his novel and the selection of his material. There is a psychological distancing by both the novelist and the characters in the novel from the unfathomable Hindu; and this oblique confession of defeat is reflected in the flatness of professor Godbole and the judge Das, much as though Forster did not even try give them any life. "I have passed abruptly", he says in one of his letters "from Hinduism to Islam and the change is a relief... from the mess and profusion and confusion".

Yet there is no explicit denial of Hindu India, only an arm's length wariness of it and a tentative acknowledgment of it through Adela Quested, as the "true India". Hence, part three of the novel, the temple and fes-

Continued ...

Into Forster's India

Continued from Page 1

tival scene, sections of which could have appeared in a not very distinguished travel magazine and sometimes near unredeemed banality. It seems, one feels, to have been hurriedly tagged on to give the novel the kind of belliștis it readers might expect. Sensing this lack and this oddity some interpreters of the Passage have tried to inject into it several layers of symbolic meaning, including one that disposes Aziz with Godbole at the centre of the stage and accepts the professor as the true voice of India.

In a similar spirit of desperation the caves have been seized on as heavily "symbolic" though Forster has disclosed that their symbolic connection did not occur to him until years after he had completed the novel. However, he evidently felt that some mystification was in order, that a place must be found for the obliquely snumbo-jumbo, so that the novel could have pretensions of being something more enduring than an

If there is an implausibility about Forster's sketchy treatment of Hindu India what can be said of the much less esoteric Anglo-Indian situation that is the warp and woof of the Passage story? Both in its setting and in its manner the trial lacks credibility; and the unintended farcical elements in it render it too weak to sustain the weight of the serious Indo-British implications.

essay on British manners in India, lend themselves easily enough to vague intimations of the Indian earth spirit, the universal and the visionary; and to echoes of undefinable profundity which keep ringing in Adela's ears and reduce Mrs. Moore to a conveniently unexplained taciturnity.

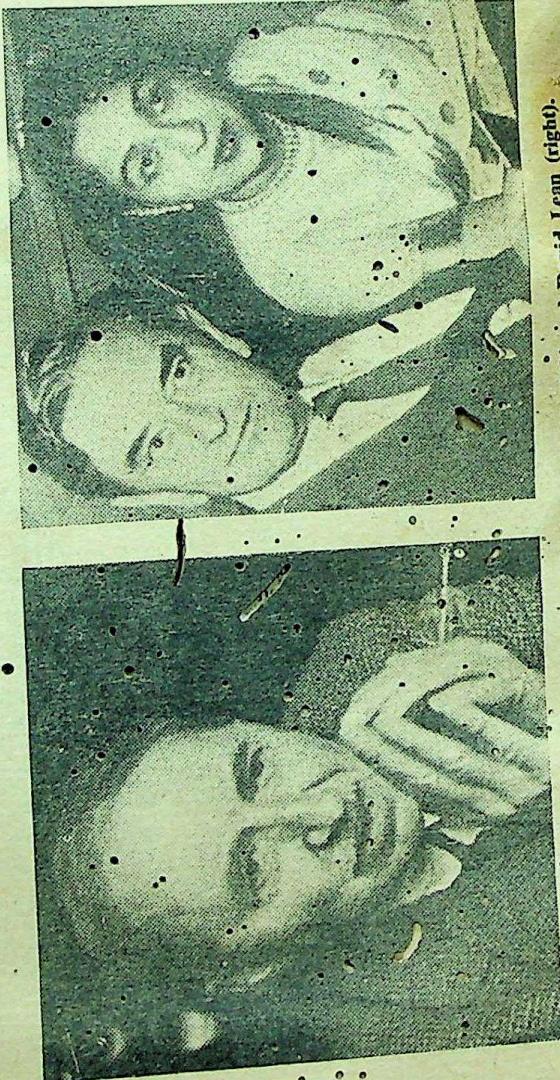
If there is an implausibility for Chandrapore's white community and official hierarchy could it have been as idiotically stiff-necked in the burra sahib way as Forster depicts it? One doubts that the majority of Englishmen in India were anywhere near the stereotype of the offensive imperialist; and Forster seems to concede this when he ~~gives~~ causes

the subtly graded 'shades' between black and white. There can not be a more effective prescription for not understanding Indian than this. Could the British community have supported Adela and then withdrawn support so absolutely, in response initially to the belief that she had been "insulted" and subsequently to her repudiation of her charges against Aziz?

There is no evidence in the novel of a burgeoning independence movement, of a progressively sophisticated political and social challenge to the British presence and of an Indian capacity for self-rule. This bigger canvas was outside Forster's miniaturist's scope with its involvement with the personal and deliberate evasion of the impersonal.

But what is the central point that finally emerges? That some Englishmen in India were occasionally ill-bred bounders. Perhaps that needed to be said in 1924 but in saying it as Forster has done have we a great novel? What will David Lean make of this period mish-mash? Possibly a competent film but, within the limitations of the material he has, hardly a great one.

A BRIDGE TO BRITISH INDIA?: E. M. Forster (left) and David Lean (right).



Profile Of A Patriot

ON December 3 this year, the country celebrates the birth centenary of an outstanding personality of the Indian nation: movement—a man who, as Sarojini Naidu once said, "wins victories over the hearts of men because in him there is essential sweetness that is part of his strength". In paying homage to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, one remembers his undeniably charisma, his erudition, his pervasive nationalism, and his impeccable conduct as the first President of independent India. That Valmiki

Conferences had yielded precious little. The country's nascent nationalism lay stifled in squalor and repression. It was in the backdrop that Gandhiji, proposing Prasad's name as the Congress president, wrote to him: "Among the men devoted to truth and non-violence and commanding popularity, I see none like you..."

Prasad's election as the Congress president was hailed all over India. The Seagullight, reporting the massive upsurge, wrote, "If there was any such

little trust in which other national leaders continuously looked up to Rajendra Prasad for wisdom and counsel. In the context of Congress victories in eight provinces, this became more significant. Whether it was Bengal ("very selfishly, I am casting the burden of the Bengal affair on you"; Nehru), Assam ("to whom but you shall we look for guidance"; Gopinath Bardoli), NFWP ("you have done what was best under the circumstances in the frontier"; Patel) or Orissa ("I will be glad if you could come over and benefit us with your advice"), Biswanath Das, one finds Prasad's guidance constantly sought and respected. In his own state of Bihar, his advice ran the entire gamut of administration, from scarcity relief, tenancy regulation and educational reform to control over public women at village fairs!

Of Prasad's compulsive nationalism—his love for the Harijans, his unshakable faith in the ways of the Mahatma, his efforts in merging strident reli-

By Ashok Basu

Choudhary, his private secretary and close associate should, on this occasion, graft together and publish Rajendra Prasad's letters and correspondence*, is, indeed, a fitting tribute to his memory.

The task is envisaged as a six-volume project. The book under review—the first—covers the period 1934-38. The collection of 212 letters is arranged in two parts, one consisting of correspondence made by or to Rajen-

thing as the tyranny of love, then Rajendra Babu was easily the victim of it...literally being pressed down under the load of flowers and garlands...as they were showered on him.

In his euphoric presidential address at the Bombay session of the Congress, Prasad spelt out the tasks ahead: "God is with us in this epic struggle of an unarmed people fighting a most powerful Government equip-



Rajendra Prasad, Congress president, with Gandhiji

dra Prasad, and the other, of that exchanged between other prominent contemporary leaders with copies to him. There is an appendix of 51 selected documents relevant to the era. Together, they provide an engrossing account of one of the most informative periods of the Indian renaissance.

The book begins with Prasad's election as the Congress president in 1934. The mood of the era was one of introspection, even despair. The Civil Disobedience Movement stood suspended under Gandhiji's instructions. The Mahatma had even made known his desire to retire from the Congress. Three Round Table

ped with the latest engines of gious and linguistic aspirations destruction. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of independence'.

The Government of India Act 1935, one recalls, paved the way for the first elections to the Provincial Assemblies. To the Congress, the elections came as a forum for denouncing the white paper and the repressive policies of the alien Government. A heavy burden was cast upon Rajendra Prasad, who, along with Vallabhbhai Patel and Abul Kalam Azad, formed the Parliamentary Board for selection of candidates. Prasad's letters of this period reflect both his inner trauma as well as an unflinching zeal to harness the resurgent nationalism for the ends of self-determination.

Admittedly, piecing together personal correspondence of this sort is not an easy task. Some of the letters would contain classified information not available to the public. A few, again, might be lost or mislaid. Despite such gaps, the present compilation—like those of Patel and Netaji earlier—is of considerable value as authentic source material for an in-depth appreciation of contemporary Indian history.

*Dr Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents; Centenary Publication, Vol. 1. Edited by Valmiki Choudhary. (Allied, Rs. 125.)

What strikes one from the exchange of letters is the absolute

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



This tribe of critics...

good reviewer can help the author not by appealing to his or her vanity, but by tinturing the new book with a few doubts about its claim to being the most wonderful book in the world.

— Mulk Raj Anand

EVIEWING literally means viewing again, not by the author who writes, it by someone else. In our time, the reviewer is someone appointed by the Sunday supplement of a publication. In view of the fact that hundreds and thousands of books are used on different subjects, some kind of discriminating comment is necessary to enable librarians to decide which books to buy and which not to buy. Also, "common reader" needs a

guide. The reviewer is generally chosen from among experts, particularly in the West, who may be able to write in a style appropriate to the popular press.

In the last 200 years, when more books have been published than in the previous 200 years, reviewing has become a profession. Every newspaper and magazine has a panel of reviewers. In the 19th century certain magazines were started, like the Edinburgh Review, the Fortnightly Review, and the Times Literary Supplement in Britain, and Nouvelle Re-

vue Francaise in France, which brought up a new kind of commentator, different from book reviewers in newspapers. They were supposed to write review-articles, which were longer than the three to seven paragraph reviews of the Sunday supplements, and went deeply into the books under consideration, compared and contrasted the works before them with previous and contemporary works and enlightened readers with fairly objective estimates. This tribe of reviewers came to be called critics.

There have been a few significant essayists, poets and professors in Europe, and later in America, who have not been willing members of this order.

The great controversy between classicism and the order it implied, and romanticism with its basis in the expression of unbridled desire and pursuit of miscellaneous impulses, has remained the theme of their writings for some generations. Some neglected

writers of the past have been evaluated. Many books, ignored by earlier generations, were recognised as worth remembering. And many new writers were stimulated to compete with creative men of established reputation, to prove that there is fresh talent in every period which equals that of the past.

In fact, critics like Sartre have suggested, with some degree of plausibility, that some of the classics have been overrated, because of the bias for past greatness, and some inspired contemporary books have been suppressed through prejudice against the present.

IN our country reviewing of books began long after the British impact. Few among the alien rulers were men of learning. Historian and essayist, Lord Macaulay, was so biased against the ancient cultures of India that he said, "There is nothing of any value in the Sanskrit, Arabic and

talented men and women went to the sources of learning in the West itself. And, before the early 20th century, there arose essayists, novelists, poets, journalists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, M. K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, M. N. Roy, C. Rajagopalachari, Satyamurti, Syed Ahmed, Muhammad Iqbal, Abdulla Yussuf Ali and Abdulla Brevli. English language magazines like the Modern Review in eastern India, Triveni in south India, and Indian Review in northern India, flourished.

Since independence, the number of journals, Sunday supplements and weeklies has multiplied, thereby enabling access to many platforms for the battle of ideas, of which we as a people are very fond.

Unfortunately, after the phase

This is not to say that there are no intellectuals of calibre in our midst, or highly talented young writers and journalists. But, in the earlier period, the freedom struggle itself supplied certain values, like liberalism, justice and freedom of thought, which were the unstated obiter dicta for all writings. Whatever might help to liberate the mind and the heart was encouraged.

At that time, the salacious writings of George W. M. Reynolds, Charles Garvice and John Cleland were more than compensated for by the preference, in the universities, for novelists of the golden age of English fiction — Fielding, Richardson and Smollett, as well as 19th century novelists like Thackeray, Dickens and Hardy.

Today there is the vast dumping of cheap American paperbacks by writers of commercial

the university intelligentsia, whose ultimate ambition is to teach abroad, to consider the uprush of Indian writings, as of equal significance to the bursts of creativity in the West. Perhaps it is best, in this age of decay of decencies, to rely on the writer's own integrity.

Our inspirations demand from us the persistent struggle to utter the truth as we know or feel it. The creative arts are not merely for self-expression, important as that element is in the writing of poetry or prose. They are criticisms of life itself and interpretations of various ways of life.

Incidentally, a good reviewer can also help the author not by appealing to his or her vanity, but by tinturing the new book with a few doubts about its claim to being the most wonderful book in the world.

Book Review

Persian literature of India worthy to go into the shelf of a good European library." James Mill, who never visited India, wrote a history of India, condemning all the civilizations which flourished in our country as barbarous. Sir John Shore, and the followers of Jeremy Bentham, thought that the only hope for Indians lay in converting to Christianity.

Liberal westerners like Sir William Jones, Herace Hayman Wilson, Colebrooke and Max Mueller, began to learn Sanskrit and rendered certain important creative and critical books into English. The Royal Asiatic Society was founded for the collection of ancient texts and archives, with journals like the Indian Antiquary through which men like Sir Richard Temple and his associates rendered into English many Indian myths and legends. And magazines began reviewing on the lines of the Edinburgh Review. Thus various books — good, bad and indifferent — on Indian culture, by westerners as well as the newly-educated Indians, were reviewed.

The example of the Indian Antiquary magazine led to the publication of some Indian journals. Bankim Chandra Chatterji started a journal. And, later, the Tagore family initiated the magazine Prabasi. This was followed in the contemporary period by Parichay, edited by Sudhindranath Dutta and later by Gopal Halder. The example of these Bengali magazines spread to other parts of India, and journals appeared almost all the major languages of the country.

As the medium of teaching in the universities, appointed by Lord Macaulay, through his "minute" on education, was English, several generations of Indians became, not what the imperialists had wanted — babus to fill junior positions in the offices of the "sarkar" — but fluent speakers and writers of an alien tongue. Some talented men and women went to the sources of learning in the West itself. And, before the early 20th century, there arose essayists, novelists, poets, journalists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, M. K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, M. N. Roy, C. Rajagopalachari, Satyamurti, Syed Ahmed, Muhammad Iqbal, Abdulla Yussuf Ali and Syed Abdulla Brevli. English language magazines like the Modern Review in eastern India, Triveni in south India, and Indian Review in northern India, flourished.

Since independence, the number of journals, Sunday supplements and weeklies has multiplied, thereby enabling access to many platforms for the battle of ideas, of which we as a people are very fond.

Unfortunately, after the phase

of the first sincere efforts at dissemination of knowledge, through the Prabasi and Modern Review kind of journal, the costs of publishing proved heavy, and only newspaper proprietors were in a position to invest in such efforts. But the chief interest of the biggest press barons in India, as elsewhere in the world, has been to make profits. So the emphasis has shifted to sensationalism of sex, violence and political gossip, save for some honourable exceptions.

Therefore, the reviewing of books, which was a main feature of magazines like Modern Review, has degenerated. Review sections in the weeklies are limited. And in the Sunday supplements of daily newspapers more space is given to books published abroad, or by the agents of foreign publishers in India, than to books published in our country.

A Crisis Of Conscience

Often, fashionable journalists who do not have any knowledge of the subject of a book write about it. Sometimes an indigent professor, who does not know much about a book, will be asked to review it. And there are some snobs among the literary intelligentsia, who have been to Cambridge, or Leeds, or London, for three years, for whom nothing which is not published in London, New York, or Toronto, is any good. As payment for reviews is not on a par with payment abroad, they refuse to write. They do critiques for journals abroad in which they can censure books produced in India.

There is thus a crisis of conscience in the field of reviewing, as in the world of Indian literature as a whole. Perhaps such a crisis is endemic to every period. But having been a contemporary of three generations of writing, I notice the devaluation of the currency of values.

This is not to say that there are no intellectuals of calibre in our midst, or highly talented young writers and journalists. But, in the earlier period, the freedom struggle itself supplied certain values, like liberalism, justice and freedom of thought, which were the unstated ~~obiter dicta~~ for all writings. Whatever might help to liberate the mind and the heart was encouraged. At that time, the salacious writings of George W. M. Reynolds, Charles Garvice and John Cleland were more than compensated for by the preference, in the universities, for novelists of the golden age of English fiction — Fielding, Richardson and Smollet, as well as 19th century novelists like Thackeray, Dickens and Hardy.

Today there is the vast dumping of cheap American paperbacks by writers of commercial

and sensational intent. Who is to tell anyone that these books are mostly fodder for the jaded appetites of the bored men and women of our urban consumer society? And that, as against these technically well-written books, even the least little, young Indian writer, wanting to express himself in Malda, Gaya, Padukatai, Jaipur, Cuttack or Morvi, though technically ill-equipped but sincere, is far more worth reading? But the young amateur has little or no chance of coming up for air, when even the mature writers get scurvy treatment.

WHAT are we, then, to do about bringing integrity into reviewing in our country?

I am afraid there is no other way but for the press to spend money on able intellectuals, who may be appointed as contributing literary editors and who may do the work that Desmond MacCarthy did in England, Edmund Wilson in the USA, Raymond Aaron in France, George Lukacz in the communist world and Arthur Lundqvist in the Nordic countries.

There is hardly any reviewing in regional magazines, except in Bengal and Kerala, and to some extent in Hindi. I feel that such a venture as the Indian Book Chronicle initiated by Dr. Arvind Singh and published from New Delhi, could have been sustained and made more comprehensively representative of the various regions. But the heroic editor had to close it down for lack of advertising support from publishers. There should be such a magazine in every language with a panel of contributors agreeing to accept a nominal fee for typewriting, postage, and incidentals.

But I see little hope. The press has to emphasise smart journalism, as against serious reviewing. It is futile to expect the frustrated small minds of the bulk of the university intelligentsia whose ultimate ambition is to teach abroad, to consider the uprush of Indian writings, as of equal significance to the bursts of creativeness in the West. Perhaps it is best, in this age of decay of decencies, to rely on the writer's own integrity.

Our inspirations demand from us the persistent struggle to utter the truth as we know or feel it. The creative arts are not merely for self-expression, important as that element is in the writing of poetry or prose. They are criticisms of life itself and interpretations of various ways of life.

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Assassins In Robes

Author is a former judge of the Sri Lanka Supreme Court. He has spent his legal mind on the study of Bandaranaike's assassination and has done a good job of it.

V. Kamath

SOLomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike, born on January 8, in a wealthy Sri Lankan family, had his education like all true sons of — in England, was called Bar, returned home in due course, took to politics at an early age, became a Buddhist monk, won elections, became Minister of Sri Lanka on September 25, 1959, was assassinated at his home by a Buddhist monk. There is some irony in the fact that a strong Buddhist revivalist should have been murdered in his own home by a Buddhist monk wearing the same robe.

Chronicler of the assassination makes the point that "had Bandaranaike not entered politics and not crowned his political career by being elected Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, he would have fallen a victim to an assassin's bullet". That is self-evident. Nobody would have been killed in his home by a Buddhist monk.

As the biographer later writes: "It was because some of Bandaranaike's staunch supporters were unable to receive royal favours at his hands that they decided that he should be assassinated." Those who were involved in the conspiracy to murder the Sri Lanka Prime Minister were a motley lot and included two Buddhist monks, a viharadhipathy (chief), a former cabinet minister, an ayurvedic physician, an actor of police, the proprietor of a printing press, a businessman and a motor mechanic. A very strange assortment indeed.

il Plot

Author is a former judge of the Sri Lanka Supreme Court prior to holding the post of Crown Counsel Solicitor-General. He has spent his legal mind to bear the study of Bandaranaike's assassination and has done a good job of it. Mr. Alles first traces the rise of Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka politics to provide background to the assassination. There is no doubt that murdered Prime Minister felt deeply for his country's common people, but it is strange that those who plotted to kill him came from this very same class whose fortunes the Prime Minister had sought to improve. This it has been rightly said

that "the needs of the masses often conflict with the desire of power-hungry politicians and clergymen".

The Assassination of a Prime Minister covers the conspiracy from its inception through the trial of those accused to the final denouement, with the sure touch of a professional. The narrative is quick-paced and detailed. It may be remembered that Mr. Alles had led evidence before the Bandaranaike Assassination Commission and is very familiar not only with the events that led up to the assassination but with the lives and

sions relating to the execution of the plot". Mr. Alles thinks that the magistrate who first looked into the matter "misdirected himself". That is not at all convincing.

LIKE Mr. Alles, S. J. Tambiah is also a Sri Lankan who admits, in a charming self-confession, that he is "phenomenologically" involved in the sketching of ethnic conflicts in his native country and that what he has written is not a "distant academic treatise" — he is currently teaching at Harvard — but an "engaged political tract".



SOLOMON WEST RIDGEWAY DIAS BANDARANAIKE: It is ironic that a strong Buddhist revivalist was murdered in his own home by a Buddhist monk wearing Buddhist robes.

The Assassination Of A Prime Minister : By A. C. Alles (Vantage Press, New York, \$13.95)

Sri-Lanka : Ethnic Fratricide And The Dismantling Of Democracy : By S. J. Tambiah (OUP, Bombay, Rs. 110)

careers of the accused. That, no doubt, has contributed not only to the richness of the material adduced but to the logical manner, shorn of rhetoric and emotion, in which it has been presented.

But one doubt persists: Why was Vimala Wijewardene not committed to trial? She had links with the conspirators, the Commission had found "that she had prior knowledge of the attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister" and that "with this knowledge she permitted the use of her residence... for discuss-

That should put the reader on guard though an admission of involvement should not automatically be construed to be an excuse for lack of objectivity. Indeed, there is ample reason to believe that Mr. Tambiah has correctly understood the historical background to the Sinhalese-Tamil relations in Sri Lanka, and is as objective as one can be. Which is why we can give more than a passing thought to his "prescription for the future" which he details in one of his last chapters.

But before coming to that one

must carefully read the preceding chapters that deal with the 1983 riots and their origin, a sketch of the antecedents to Sri Lankan independence and Mr. Tambiah's analysis of the political violence of our times. He traces the manner in which Sri Lankan society came to be polarised into two camps, "clinging to distorted and stereotyped perceptions of each other, unwilling to communicate, negotiate or compromise and convinced that they are totally separate peoples, in terms of culture and origin".

Remarks Mr. Tambiah, somewhat sadly: "The truths concerning the common historic origins of both Sinhalese and Tamils become impossible to contemplate, and those scholars who speak the truth are likely to

The Assassination of a Prime Minister covers the conspiracy from its inception through the trial of those accused to the final denouement with the sure touch of a professional.

be branded as traitors." Further, he adds: "And the sad fact is that the main body of the people caught in between — ranging from those few who find any kind of violence repugnant to those many who are ambivalent and confused about the rights and wrongs of the rival 'ethnic' claims — are inexorably seduced and forced into taking sides as the spilling of blood on both sides heightens the emotions and sentiments cohering around such primordial themes as kinship, people, religion, language and 'race'".

Mr. Tambiah, then, is not a doctrinaire "Tamilist" who sees the situation from only one point of view. He sees the problem in its entirety. He has wise advice to give to Tamils as when he says that "the Tamils, on their side, must realistically accept Sinhalese as the only viable and economical language for much of the country's administration and must acquire competence in Sinhalese if they wish to serve as administrative officers in districts where the Sinhalese are in a majority". He further pleads that the formation of regional or provincial autonomy should not result in restricted mobility but rather, any Sinhalese or Tamil, as a citizen, should be able to reside in any part of the country, and be eligible for all facilities, privileges, positions on universalistic criteria of fitness, merit and performance.

Presently, Mr. Tambiah's suggestion sounds like a cry in the wilderness. I found this work immensely educative. More, it is a wise book that shows how in times past there had been a "continuous peaceful uncoerced Sinhalisation and Buddhistisation of diverse South Indian peoples and gods". It can happen again given a chance. And the Sinhala people must give themselves that chance — that is the crux of Mr. Tambiah's argument — because that way lies sanity and progress of the whole country.

In George Paterson's account of investigations there are few servants of the East India Company, from the highest to the lowest, who emerge well from this inventory of personal greed.

by Anna Khanna

PARASITES feeding upon parasites. That is the picture that ultimately emerges from Pamela Nightingale's book, *Fortune and Integrity*. Based on the nine volumes of the Indian Diary of George Paterson (1769-1774) it dissects British moral attitudes towards the get-rich-quick British who were supposed to be the backbone of the East India Company, but who spent their time sedulously

The get-rich-quick gang

feathering their own nests, and living lives of idle extravagance which bore little resemblance to their comparatively drab and mundane existence on British shores.

It poses the question: "Can one make a fortune and retain one's integrity?" Much of the book is devoted to this difficult issue which stemmed from a situation in which rajahs fed off peasants while the British tried to suck the rajahs dry. One gambit of the British was to dangle rich status symbols before their eyes, encourage them to contract hefty loans to pay for them, then raise the interest rates to exorbitant levels. They did nothing to discourage the rajahs from waging wars against each other as fundraising exploits, because lending money for the purpose was oh-so-profitable. Quite imaginably, intrigue spread its tentacles in all directions and corruption was rife.

The fact that the British indulged in such activities, not to speak of the "presents" they extracted for services rendered to the Indian aristocracy, had begun to cause much eyebrow-raising in Britain, supposedly out of moral reprobation, but often actually out of envy.

George Paterson himself, although not one of his breed, must also have been an object of such envy, having launched himself on the social scene with great eclat after his return from India, when he threw a magnificent ball in Dundee at which people went on drinking till early in the morning "and then beginning to turn a little riotous they displayed a truly British spirit by demolishing all the decanters, bottles and glasses, and indeed everything that was breakable in the room". This exploit earned Paterson the "titles" of "Nabob from Madras" and "Eastern prince".

The son of a weaver, he had started life as an army surgeon, but when he returned from India, he had amassed an enormous fortune and proceeded to find himself an aristocratic bride, a coat of arms and a castle. "He lived to enjoy them for more than 40

years, dying in 1817 at the age of 83, the father of seven sons and three daughters. His friends in Madras wrote to him long after his return and it is clear from the trouble he took to have his diary handsomely copied out that he valued his Indian experiences far more than the fortune they brought him".

This is a debatable point, considering that not all of his experiences with either the rajahs or the British were happy ones. Nevertheless, he stayed on, when he always had the option to leave, no doubt to make his fortune while he had such a golden opportunity. What was different about Paterson's initiation into fortune-making was that he had originally come to India as secretary to Sir John Lindsay who, in 1769, had been appointed the "King's Minister" ostensibly to enquire into how the Treaty of Paris was being observed in India but actually to make secret enquiries into the relations between the Company's servants and the Nawab of Arcot.

So Paterson's role was to have been that of moral arbiter. Sit in judgment he did, but he very soon became the confidential adviser to the Nawab of

as studying medicine, he became well-versed in languages and literature, mixed with the intelligentsia at Edinburgh University and became "a man of the enlightenment". The writer describes him as a person of sensitive, intellectual curiosity, with a scientific approach to things. He did well in life, not because of influence or connections, but because of his own talents and energy.

Because he had no strong loyalties to class or creed, his judgment, according to the author, remained unclouded by prejudice. She is also careful to make the point that, although Paterson obviously wished his diaries to go down in posterity, having had them copied out and handsomely bound, this does not mean that facts were specially slanted for public consumption. She makes it clear that what he records were day-to-day experiences in which he himself is often shown in an unflattering light. None the less the stern notions of morality derived from his early background influenced his judgments throughout his six-year stay in India do not seem to have hampered him in his acquisition of a fortune..

Fortune And Integrity: A Study Of Moral Attitudes In The India Diary Of George Paterson: 1769-1774 : By Pamela Nightingale (OUP, Rs. 140)

Arcot, thus rendering his own position somewhat equivocal. This did not prevent him from retaining a strong sense of moral integrity and judging the society in which he found himself by his own strict moral standards. In rendering service to the nawab, his own view was that his integrity remained unimpaired because he put sincerity first: he genuinely attempted to serve the nawab's best interests.

How one judged varied according to the society one sprang from and the society one aspired to. Paterson's father had been sufficiently well-to-do to give his son a liberal education. As well

The writer goes into the niceties of British mercantile middle class morals as opposed to upper class and aristocratic attitudes to money-making and the propensity of the Indian situation to lure the most staunchly upright citizens away from their cast iron codes of conduct with the juiciest of bait. There seems to have been a tacit understanding that private trading on the part of the Company's servants was quite in order provided it did not interfere with the larger interests of the Company. In Paterson's account of investigations into this, there are few, from the highest to the lowest, who emerge well from



FORTUNE HUNTERS: "... till the Indian ran out with tears in his eyes and money in his pocket." A sketch by Franklin Wilson.

this inventory of ... But the incidents ad port of the central a certain morbid fasc them.

Paterson, who had India with a singular ed and positive to the society he was not only deeply disturbed by the nawab's being ill-used Company, but was in the way in which were oppressed in the nawab's coffers. Describes the character employed by the nawab as this "plundered" the country by the nawab's inu mands.

Paterson for his seems to have que moral right of the take Indian territory the thre mercial or financial face' then he made no and I. But claims that the Not now, confer material or in so. If the fits on Indian society he was prepared to the subject was that "the earlessness councillors when the Jain mo justices of the peace is not somet away justice to the but to be judgments" (emphasis)

What made Paterson's outlook from a lofty one than a servant was not just within a top and integrity but "a within five square sympathy and a set out five square responsibility which stretched a thousand the narrow horizon of a company's settlements". see the people of large servile class, like the lower orders society could somehow be invited dead houses and i Sravana unique place other great



ER TO ETERNITY: A devotee at the feet of the magnificent monolithic statue of Gomateshwara at Sravana Belgola. Photo: Dinesh Bellare.

Death be not proud

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Paterson for his
seems to have quibbled over death? Fear the fog
moral right of the man in the throat, the mist
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commercial or financial? Then he made no end. But not any Jain
claims that the man is not now, nor ever has
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fits on Indian society, people who have lived in
he was prepared to die. The communion with, and
subject was that "the fearlessness of death they
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ustices of the peace is not something to be held
away justice to the man, but to be welcomed as a
judgments" (emphasis added).

What made Paterson here has this been mani-
an outlook from anywhere than at Sravana Bel-
servants was not just here, says historian S. Set-
and integrity but "within a topographical area
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large servile class, women are recorded as
the people of Sravana Belgola, indeed,
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the poor."

in the world has been so intensely shaped by the incidence of death as this. Indeed, the history of Sravana Belgola (where stands the magnificent monolithic statue of Gomateshwara) begins with the ritual death of a great monk and its subsequent course, as Settar traces so diligently, unfolds the fluctuation of its fortunes "centring round the incidence of death". By any account Sravana Belgola is a fascinating place, capturing one by the margin of one's mind.

The Jains, in a sense, commended death. No other people in the world, it may be confidently said, have given the subject such deep and profound thought as have the Jains. Their preoccupation with it is so much that without understanding their attitude towards it, it is almost impossible to understand their central philosophy of life. "What is there miserable in the three world except the body...? Which enlightened man will move about on the earth leaning on the staff of the body, which is in contact with the burning fire of misery? This body, an abode of misery,

The Jains commended death, yes, but they cautioned against throwing away life in a cavalier manner. For one thing, they emphatically opposed suicide. That was a process which involved emotion (ranga) and violence (himsa) and it was a spiritual crime and a cowardly course of escapade. How else, then, was one to die? The Jains, with their admirable logic, have identified as many as 48 types of death, grouped under three categories: *bala marana* (childish or foolish death), *pandita marana* (wise death) and *pandita pandita marana* (the wisest of wise deaths).

The Jains reject the first of the three which includes suicide in unequivocal terms; the second (*pandita marana*) which suggests partial attainment and wisdom, is conditionally accepted and advocated and the third (*pandita pandita marana*) is enthusiastically recommended. The first begets no fruits; the second secures partial rewards, but the third releases the aspirant from all bondage, including the cycle of rebirth. But, according to the Jains, *pandita marana* was not to

Inviting Death : By S. Settar (Institute of Indian Art History, Karnataka University, Dharwad)

is indeed fit to be abandoned... Having thus reflected on the whole nature of the world... meditating on his own nature with half-closed eyes and an unshaken mind, he abandoned his body..." says one edict, describing the ritual death of a monk.

be easily had. It was to be gained by truly omniscient beings, the Tirthankaras. Liberated from rebirth such sublime souls were eternally emancipated. Because this last type of death is considered to be beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, there are no

historical instances of such in Sravana Belgola. But instances of pandita deaths are not wanting.

The Jain agamas identify four types of panditas and three types of pandita deaths. An aspirant could invite pandita death by resorting to any one of three types of rituals: *bhaktapratyakhya* (a slow and moderate method of mortification), *ingini* (giving up all types of food and drink and rejecting help and services from others) and *padopagamana* (in which the aspirant mortifies himself severely and aims at terminating life early, denying himself not only food and drink, services by others as well as self-service and sticking to his place and posture and enduring every kind of onslaught made on him).

The centre of action was always the summit of a low-lying granite hill, now known as Chandragiri, but better known to history as Katavapra (sepulchral hill). Chandragiri (small hill) is close to Vindhya (large hill) and the two hills are at the centre of an area with an unbroken continuity of history of about a millennium and a half. This is where Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta came around the 3rd century BC. This is where we have the tallest colossus in the country, the largest number of Digambara temples concentrated in any single place and the highest number of *nisidhis* or commemorative monuments.

Inviting Death tells us the story of the sepulchral hill where there are 93 recorded instances of ritual death and as many memorial stones. The practice of voluntary death, however, which began around the 7th century seems to have nearly come to an end after the 14th century.

It is not that anybody who wanted to give up life was permitted to do so. Strict rules had to be obeyed in letter and spirit. He who desired death by *sama-dhi* for instance, had to be free "from" all kinds of desires" including the desire to die; he was not to look back on his past happiness, nor look forward to future rewards; he was to gain control over hunger and thirst, conquer the 22 *parishas*, including heat, cold and pain and strictly observe the code of *brahmacharya*. Absorbed in heroic meditation, he had to be an *antar-gata kevali*. Inviting death was a long and tedious business and was not meant for cowards. It was, really, a form of highest intellectual exercise.

Inviting Death is a work of scholarship. It tells us not only about how death is invited and how release is obtained, but explains the meaning and significance of rituals, the rise and fall of ritual practices, the ritual in actual practice, the careers and contributions of some honoured saints, the nature of *nisidhis*, their characteristics, variety and art and much else. But overriding all the scholarship is the awesome study of the approach to death.

With men and women ready to die, one might ask with the poet: "Where is death stinging? Where, grave, thy victory?"

It was unthinkable that the Hindus, whom the missionaries were maligning as barbarous and ignorant, were observing the sky long before Christianity was even born.

by Ram Swarup

DHARAMPAL is now perhaps the best authority on a most significant period of India's history, the period when India was bidding goodbye to a relatively stable period of slow change and was entering into an era of quick change and vast disorganization. Apart from local sources, a good part of the data relating to this period is scattered in the libraries and record rooms of European countries like Portugal, Holland, France and the Great Britain which established early contacts with India. In England itself with whom India's contact became closer and more exclusive, there could easily be two to three lakhs of manuscript volumes in her different archives — around 1,70,000 in India office alone according to one of its notes.

For the last two decades, Dharampal has been studying some of this record rather closely at the India Office Library, at the British Museum, at the Public Record Office, all in London. He has frequented the Scottish Record Office, the National Library of Scotland, both at Edinburgh. He has visited the John Ryland Library, Manchester. In India itself, he has spent several months in the governmental archives of Madras, Calcutta and Delhi.

Everywhere in his exploration, Dharampal has tried to dig out the significant. Sometimes the information he got provided a new insight into the motives and doings of the men in the great drama of this period; sometimes it filled up gaps in the existing knowledge. But always the data was significant and pointed to the need of a deeper understanding and study of this period. We know that some of the best academic things have come from non-academic sources. Einstein and Keynes made their contributions as amateurs — the university connection came later on. It shows how where professionals fail, amateurs succeed when passionate interest combines with native ability.

In the book presently under review, Dharampal gives us some accounts of Indian sciences and technology by European scholars. Many of these were written at a time when the Europeans had not acquired the arrogance of power and the "white man's burden" did not weigh heavy on their shoulders. Most of the material presented in this volume first appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, and the *Transactions of the Royal*

Astronomy.

The next paper is "On the Sixth Satellite of Saturn," written in 1783 by Col. T. D. Pearce with whom we have already made our acquaintance. It was addressed to the secretary of the Royal Society, London. In this article, the author

"A Newton among Devils"

Society of Edinburgh; some material was found in the British Museum and the India Office. The material is divided into two parts: Science and Technology. The first deals with the more theoretical aspects but almost exclusively with astronomy and mathematics. It presents six papers. The second part on technology presents eleven papers on various arts and processes relating to medicine, manufacture and agriculture. Some of the subjects are inoculation against small pox, ice-making, mortar-making, iron and steel making.

The very first paper is a "Brahmin's Observatory at Banaras," written by Sir Robert Barker, for some time commander-in-chief of Bengal and later on a member of the British Parliament; there is also a supplementary note by Colonel T. D. Pearce, at that time chief engineer in the East India Company, who did the drawing of the apparatus at the

observatory. Sir Robert Barker visited the observatory in 1772 which was already in disuse and in a state of half ruin. He took measurements of "a number of instruments yet remaining, in the greatest preservation." According to his enquiry, they were built two hundred years back and exhibited "mathematical exactness in the fixing, bearing, and fitting of the several parts." The earlier editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* mentioned this observatory, but later editions omitted any such reference.

The next paper is a 60-page long, learned article, "Remarks on the Astronomy of the Brahmins," (1790) by an academician of great distinction, John Playfair A.M., F.R.S., professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh. Prof. Playfair begins by referring to some tables received from the Indies by European scholars at an early stage in their contact with the East. The "meridian" of the tables received from Siam was the same as the one used by

Banaras Pundits, that was common whether received from or the north or the "epoch" coincided with the beginning of the year 3100 B.C. According to the legend, Playfair began to calculate the astronomical positions at the time when the style is calculated back from of more modern tables, furnished with a mythical kalyug, at its maximum.

Professor Playfair is not in the position to go back to 46 centuries and to any degree of exactitude of the heavenly bodies except with the help of AT does not help integral calculus over nine theory of gravitation, all that the position of 1980? It is given in these one-time to the position as a porter, F



A HERITAGE OF HEALING: Hanuman carrying the mountain with the sanjivani buti to revive Lakshmana. A 19th century temple fresco from Malsisar, Rajasthan.

and the contrary, and finding the angles of a right-angled triangle from the hypotenuse and sides, independent of the tables and sines; and several others of similar nature much more complicated." He also saw remains or elements "more extensive than

Now (1968) says: "Preventive inoculation against the smallpox, which was practised in China from the eleventh century, apparently came from India." But as the Raj consolidated, the rulers developed a superiority complex and in 1802 banned the

theory of Indian science and imposed a small tax on it. This introduction has provided a platform for the discussion of the background material, many missing links, and many dark corners.

From the Oval Room

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V. Kamath

AT does it feel like to over nine Americanents, all the way from 1980? Hedley Dono-one-time Washingtonporter, *Fortune* writer 15 long years successor rascible Henry Luce as chief of Time Inc, did t. He had seen them all ten about them.

lin Delano Roosevelt, Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald, Jimmy Carter and Reagan, their sayings and had been grist to his mill. He was 26 when first assigned to cover it in 1940. He was well mid-60s when Carter asked to be his senior adviser. Reporters even in the United could claim better acquaintances with the presidents than

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The same actions, permutations, & combinations, will be used in the same way of reckoning all the demands that are made on it.

... various persuasions. They just do it.

and, one might say, exceeded it." Eisenhower was as wily as they come. Once his brilliant press secretary, Jim Hagerty told the boss: "If I go to that press conference and say what you want me to say, I'll get hell". To that Ike's reply was "My boy, better you than me!"

Ike had a good sense of humour as his ear-to-ear grin should indicate. Once, meeting the chairman of his council of economic advisers, Arthur Burns, he suggested that whatever advice was given be kept short. "Keep it short," said Ike mischievously, "I can't read!" Burns caught on the feeling rightaway. "We'll get along fine," he retorted. "I can't write!". The two got along well indeed.

Donovan gives Eisenhower more credit as the boss on foreign policy than many are willing to concede to him. As he puts it: "In foreign policy, Eisenhower was also a remarkably

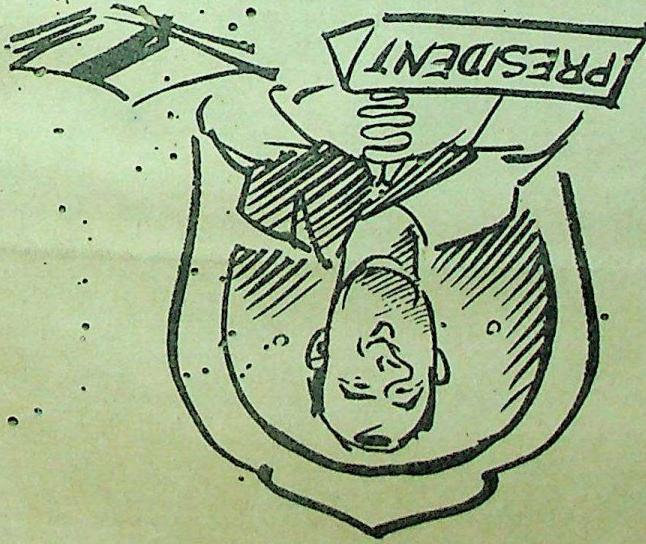
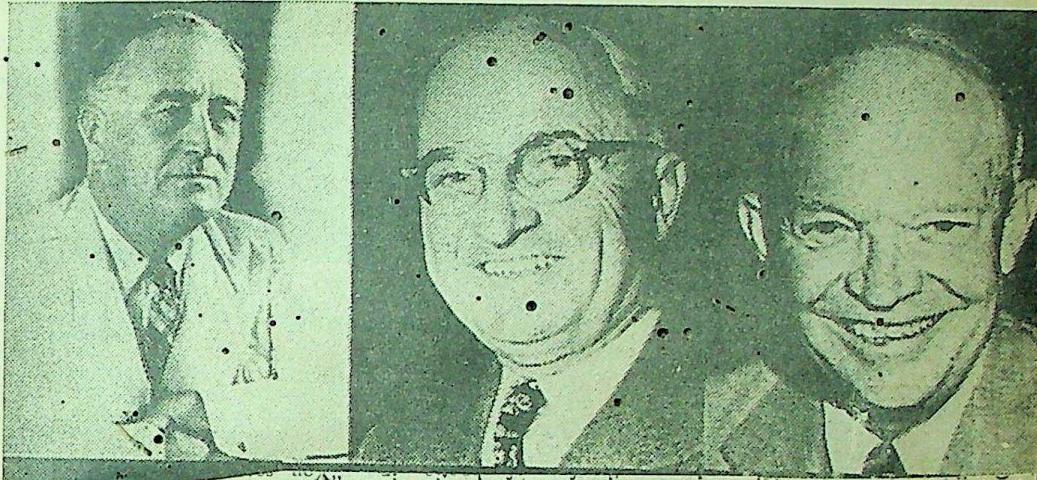
"mercurial, secretive, conniving in some ways monstrous". He tellingly recounts what George Reedy who worked for LBJ for 15 years said of him, "He could be an insufferable bastard to his staff, a bully and a sadist." And then again: "He (LBJ) may have been a son of a bitch, but he was a colossal son of a bitch!" — all of which should indicate that Donovan has no high opinion about the man who succeeded Kennedy.

An Actor President

Like Kennedy, says Donovan, Johnson was "another wholesale womaniser" but unlike Kennedy he was "notoriously deceitful as a politician". For all that, Johnson had a "much deeper strain of compassion" and became intensely religious. Donovan throws up his hands at this stage and says: "Complicated people, these Presidents!". They sure are. But the

sensible President," who was "large enough and secure enough to feel utterly unthreatened by Kissinger's brilliance, but seemed unable to control the in-fighting among his staff." Interestingly, Ford is practically the only President whose policies Donovan has cared to dissect at some length. For the rest, the book is largely anecdotal and sparse of intellectual sparkle, until he comes towards the end when the author discusses the White House and the press and what he thinks goes to make a good president. Interestingly again, it is of the Ford, Carter and Reagan administrations that he feels free to make a study in depth.

In fact the best chapters are not on what Donovan thinks about the presidents he had covered which are at best chatty but the later chapters in which he discusses foreign policy, the role of a president and the essence of the American presidential system



me others in his party think that while there is no question of changing the President, good have Rajiv Gandhi directly elected to time bad, when Zail Singh goes it would be that doesn't this call for a debate?

Lost In The White House

What is more worrying than the state of President Reagan's health, is the air of disengagement, of lassitude, the loss of his old spirit. The feeling in Washington is that Reagan doesn't really care much any more.

HE works for only around 90 minutes a day and needs even longer naps than usual. Sometimes it takes him an hour after waking to focus his thoughts again. His mind wanders, and he tells silly, pointless anecdotes.

He is almost never seen in public. When he is, it's for a wave from the White House lawn or in a carefully prepared setpiece address on TV. The week before last, he addressed an anti-abortion march in Washington—by telephone.

He shows little interest in the Iran scandal and almost none in anything else. Government departments which submit papers for consideration or approval are told to expect a long wait.

On January 22, a snow storm enveloped the city. Federal employees were sent home at 11.30, so that the government had literally as well as metaphorically disappeared. The streets were deserted. Only a few staff remained in the White House, which had become almost invisible behind the blizzard.

Washington's life is centred to an extraordinary extent around the President—and what he is doing, so there is a bizarre sense of emptiness, of suspended animation.

On January 21, the Senate voted for a \$20 billion (£13 billion) water-cleaning bill which Reagan had vetoed last year. The margin was 93 to six, a majority which implied that, on the first important measure of the new session, the President's view had become an irrelevance.

The White House was pinning its hopes on the annual State of the Union address, which he made on Wednesday. The view from the bunker was that this speech, which would go out live on national TV, could be used to restore the President's position.

Hence the bringing back of Kenneth Khachigian, one of Reagan's favourite inspirational speech-writers who filled his flo-

rid pen with red, white and blue ink.

When the time came for the President to speak, there were patriotic heroes in the Senate balcony, whom he saluted as examples of all that was best in American life.

There was also a reference to Iran, although it is thought that this was confined to an affirmation that Reagan was doing his utmost to discuss what really happened. No one was expecting an apology or an explanation.

But the return to the folksy, patriotic approach came too late. The latest polls showed that 68

commission has been given three more weeks to finish its report.

The implication was that the President—who could have broken off from watching TV at any time to see Senator Towers and his colleagues—simply wasn't ready. He needed coaching in the agreed line, chronologies had to be drawn up and the President had to be drilled in what he knew and when he knew it.

This doesn't necessarily mean that he is being taught to fib—merely that he never bothered with the details before they emerged, so he needs to learn them now.



per cent still disapproved of his handling of the Iran deal, and a clear majority—56 per cent—thought that he was lying.

The White House itself seemed surrounded by an awful lethargy. Take the Towers Commission, the "three wise men" who are investigating the working of the National Security Council and whose deadline for completing the job was originally set for January 28.

According to one insider, the commission's members asked "five or six times" for an interview with the President. Repeatedly they were told that this would have to wait until after the State of the Union speech. Since this was scheduled for the day before the deadline, it hardly left enough time. In the end, Reagan agreed to see them the next day and the

Meanwhile, it is impossible to detect who is actually running American foreign policy. George Shultz, the secretary of state, was doing all he could to distance himself from the administration—in which, in any case, he has virtually no influence. He has been testily denying that he intends to resign shortly, though few people who have talked with him really believe that.

Franz Carlucci, the new head of the National Security Council (NSC), has been too busy reorganising the council to examine foreign policy—"he's been nailng down the furniture, making sure there won't be any more Ollie Norths," said one observer.

Donald Regan, now firmly back in control as White House chief of staff, may be in charge — prime minister to a king in

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Indian business community was never a monolith and their responses have differed from time to time. Into this vacuum their responses regarding to government measures and the Congress movement have tended to differ.

Savitri Talwalkar

Worse, the Iranian agenda had been leftists and discovered this was the point with.

But they were days later, the CIA Iranian contacts Shultz's fury. But Claude than a fortnight Indian National student had promised between 1931-39 would be no deal and long a supposed to have charge of all Iran.

The secret have since been state department, contradiction to thing Reagan had the previous month.

At the absolute incompetence NSC continuing in the White House had been publicly which had led to the sacking of his son 1850 there was a big admiral Poindexter, as internal and external league Oliver North.

At the worst, the agricultural was either lying or slackened. But the else so out of touch sector grew rapidly lost all influence of War I. Economic and strategy of him more and more un-

Even the specie which gave rise brought in by Reaction to British dominated the former NATO amb in 1931. Out of 81 Abshire, is said to were British and of to keep informers invested. Rs. 113 learning as much invested in companies of the Washington by the British. The his colleagues agency system left little House.

When the Pres speak on January the day-to-day admini-

full-length public 10 weeks — people for signs of ill-health.

Yet health does be the immediate is certainly resting ration, but this is expected. What is is the air of dis lassitude, the loss of The feeling in We Reagan doesn't re any more.

THE NEHRU-GANDHI DIVIDE: As Birla along with other big businessmen considered the socialists to be a threat to their existence, they preferred to be closer to the Gaadhians.

the wealth of a nation

Compared to Japan Indian industrialisation was slow as India was under colonial rule; there was no national market and even the banks were regional, by and large. Capitalist interests were rather fragmented. Markovits says, there was no clear distinction between traders, financiers and industrialists as most big capitalists played the three roles simultaneously. All big businessmen had some kind of British connection though they were not wholly dependent on them. In Bombay, British capital was dependent on Indian finance, while in Calcutta, Indians were mere figureheads in the British controlled companies. In this way upto 1940 the British controlled industry and the status of Indian businessmen was subordinate to them.

The relationship between business and government was not quite stable. The late G.D. Birla was friendly with Sir George Schuster, the then finance member.

ber, but not so with his successor, Sir James Grigg.

The interests of the businessmen differed and sometimes they clashed. In Bombay, antagonism was evident between the big business houses and the rest of the commercial community. While the Tatas were on good terms with the government, Walchand took a militant and nationalist stance.

Fight On Both Fronts

British capitalist interests were mostly concentrated in external finance, transport, public utilities, foreign trade and export-oriented industries while Indian capital was mostly in internal trade and industries working for the internal market. Areas of intense competition between the two were few.

Between 1885 and 1917 businessmen were little involved with the national movement. The mill-owners of Bombay were indifferent.

ent to the swadeshi movement (1904-1907) while cloth imports in Calcutta categorically opposed it.

With Mahatma Gandhi's mass movements Indian capitalists thought that they would be able to pressure the government. But the response of the businessmen was uneven. Some of them were generous supporters of the Congress while others supported the liberals and still others backed the Hindu Mahasabha.

Between 1930 and 1933 the Indian economy was affected severely by the depression—a worldwide phenomenon. Prices of agricultural commodities fell and exports were curtailed. Consequently the British manufacturing industries too, were affected. At this juncture, Gandhiji started his civil disobedience campaign. The government was finding it difficult to fight on both fronts—political and economic.

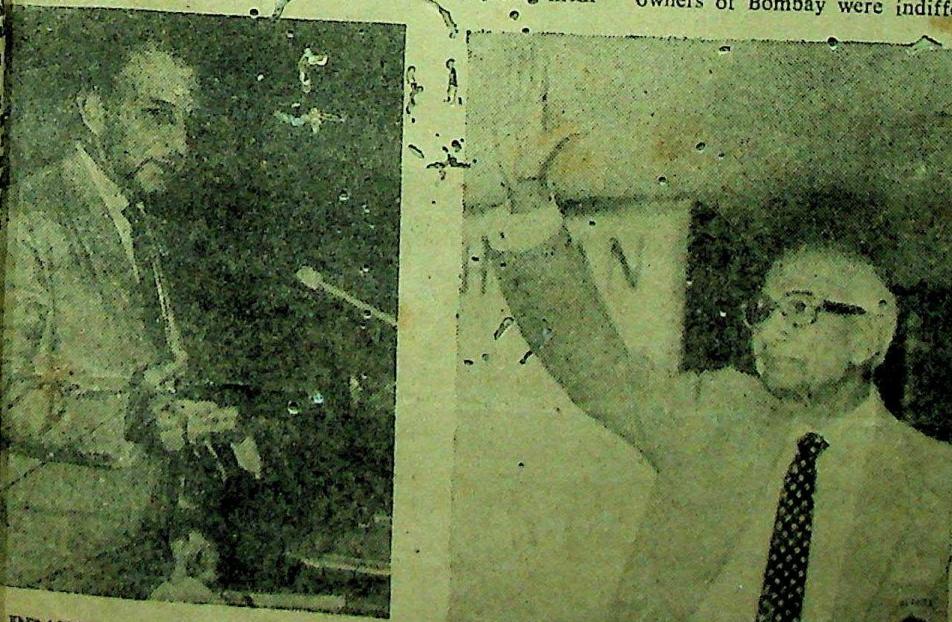
Meanwhile Sir George Schus-

Indian Business And Nation Claude Markovits (Cambridge)

ter was replaced by Sir James Grigg as finance member. The latter could not conceal his hostility towards the industrialisation of India. He thought agriculture was the natural vocation of this country and considered Keynesian ideas "silly or vague". The businessmen were disturbed and the proverbial last straw came in the form of the report of the tax board proposing to impose duties on imports of cotton goods. By this time Japanese cloth had made steady inroads into the Indian market.

Considerable Sacrifice

Under these circumstances the business community by and large helped the Congress movement. Comparatively merchants and petty traders were more enthu-



DRAWER: Both J. R. D. Tata and G. D. Birla were on good terms with the government.

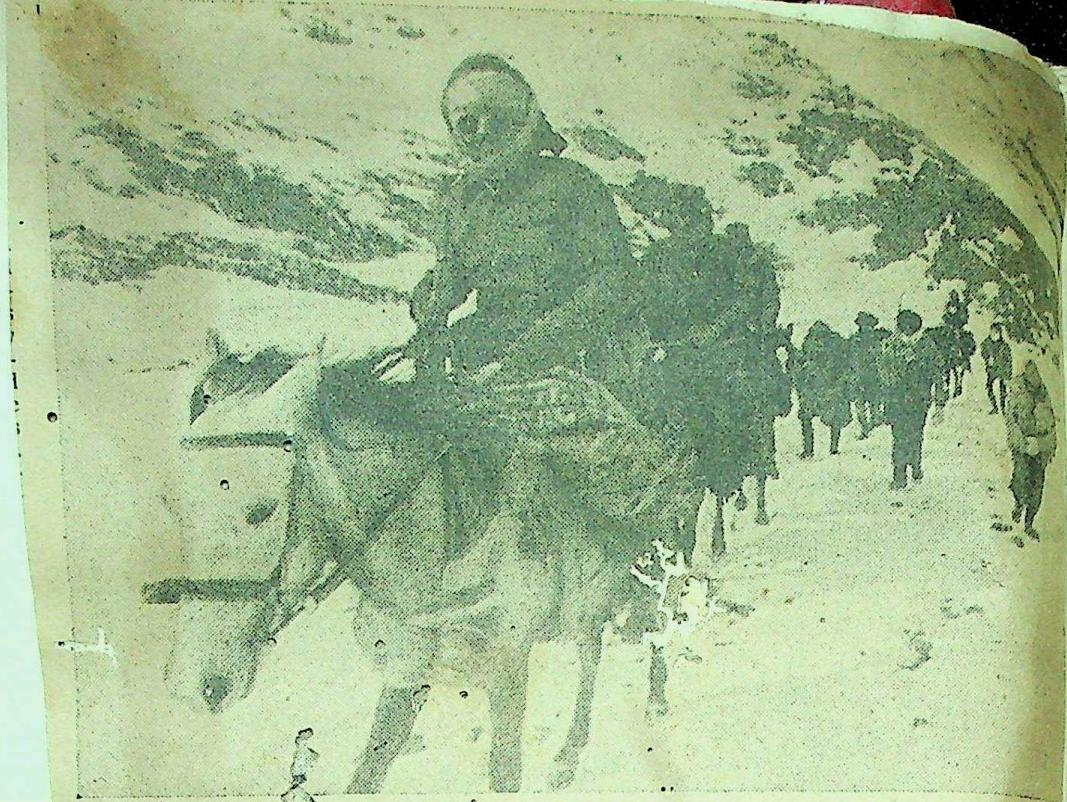
of the national cause, the way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations and combinations of the problem. They just do not



should be in the given circumstances.

that is going on has already done enough damage to our national perspective.



MOUNTAIN TREK: Moslem rebels march through the snow in the Paropamisus mountains a patrol in the area.

The Asian chessboard

Through British eyes the author sees the Afghans as wily, tenacious and intractable. And with an Afghan voice he speaks of the British as terrible, greedy and wicked invaders..

by Anna Khanna

LORDS OF THE KHYBER is aptly prefaced by a Pushkin proverb: "He is not a Pushkin who does not give a blow in return for a pinch."

But hard-hitting retaliation is far from being all that there is to the history of Afghanistan as Andre Singer shows in analysing this turbulent corridor from the time of Shah Jehan to the present-day Soviet occupation.

Highly coveted as a west-east gateway on a major trading route and consequently a prime political pawn on the Asian chessboard, Afghanistan is depicted as an ultra-sensitive arena in which Greeks and Mughals had to pit all their strength and wits against the indigenous people and in which, subsequently, Britain's paranoid fears of French or Russian hegemony were to be fought out.

A telling parallel is drawn between the British and the Soviet incursions into Afghanistan — just over a century apart and made on the same thin pretexts of border security — with the same dubious results. Both foreign powers found the occupation of Afghanistan arduous to an extreme, neither having come prepared for the moral and physical tenacity of the tribesmen or their rapidly shifting kaleidoscope of internal alliances. The biggest blunder was to fail to appreciate the role of Islam — the greatest single

catalyst in repulsing the firangi element.

It is remarkable that, while laying bare the pragmatism which was the true, if often ill-judged, driving force behind the political, commercial and military incursions into Afghanistan, the author still manages to convey the high drama of heroism with which this whole period was fraught. This too, he does without romanticising either the Afghan sense of honour — the pukhtunwali which demands vendettas and blood-feuds, or the performance of the various British military men, administrators and adventurers who set foot on Afghan soil with their mixed notions of honour, glory, prestige and profit. He does not let us forget that men are heroes or villains depending on from which point on the international compass one is looking. Through British eyes he sees the Afghans as wily, tenacious and intractable. And with an Afghan voice he speaks of the British as terrible, greedy and wicked invaders.

aloof and govern from afar for nasty surprises and trouble. While the offers praise where praise one senses behind his plainly chosen statements a sense of amusement at the sonal discomfiture of those who came to grief through their estimation of the tribal people. Elphinstone's sorry defeat says, "The imperial lion received its first bloody nose in counter this, he tells the story of Dr. Theodorus, a young Englishman, thanks to his close contact with the tribals, was able to establish a small Christian community in Bannu. No mean feat considering the solidly Islamic background of Afghan society.

The book traces with clarity the separate histories of the various tribes and their differences in the different regions of the country adds up to Afghanistan. Much emphasis is placed on the solidly Islamic background of Afghan society.

Lords Of The Khyber : The Story Of The North Frontier : By Andre Singer Faber, Rs. 140)

Much of the charm of this book hinges on events coming to us in purely human terms, almost as an extension of the charisma, (or lack of it) of the leading figures of the times. Everyone who was anyone in Afghan affairs, from Kushal Khan Khattak, the 17th century chief and poet, to Babrak Karmal, the present president, is given larger-than-life treatment. One of the most important points, which emerges time and again is that the outsiders who managed to make the greatest impact on the tribes were those who went to them directly as individuals, took an interest in them as human beings and had close personal dealings with them. Alexander Burnes and his Russian counterpart, Ivan Vitkevich were notable examples.

Anyone who tried to remain

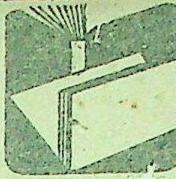
when at peace, and their influence in the face of external aggression to play favourites rather than unite internally.

Singer attributes this thorough-going democracy to individual Pushtuns who bear any kind of overlord. He points out, however, that even the Pushtuns have had any sort of united front, have been formidable.

Nearer our own times emerged from this voracity and turbulence the famous Khan who, paradoxically, in the text of the Indian struggle, allied Indian leaders like Gandhiji and the Indian party. Khan Abdul Ghan is pictured sympathetically as a great, progressive leader.

Money make

Speaking
Volumes



CONSIDERING that antecedents reach far back into the past and it is as widespread today as it was in the ancient world, bribery has inspired few books that are something more than a ventilation of moral indignation. John T. Noonan's *Bribes* (Macmillan £35) helps in some degree to fill this lacuna. It is a massive work of over 800 pages in the solid traditions of American research. It ranges from pharaonic Egypt to Elizabethan England to the East India Company and Abraham Lincoln. Along the way many figures, usually regarded as impeccably respectable, are exposed as not wholly unblemished reputations. Probably more bribery cases have got away undetected than any other kind; and the proportion of those uncovered is never likely to increase. Only the proverbial tip of the iceberg is known.

This perhaps partly explains the relative tolerance with which it has been accepted in most parts of the world during the greater part of its sordid career. Bribery, the feeling has always been, will for ever be with us. Realistically, the East has refused to see it as anything more than expediency; and the rather smug concept of incorruptibility dates from the post-reformation West. Not that in the eastern tradition bribery does not attract severe penalties, only that anyone who is foolish enough to be found out must suffer the consequences. The sort of fuss Burkhardt kicked up over Warren Hastings strikes the eastern mind as a little sanctimonious, a pretension to a refusal to allow for the weakness of human fallibility.

Moreover, the issue is not as simple as it seems. There is bribery to oil the wheels of inefficient machine, to tilt at balance when all other forces are equal, to create good will, to conceal or compensate inadequacy, to acknowledge civility.

ces over and beyond what is normal, and to effect an insurance against obstruction and harassment. Some are less excusable than others but Noonan's detailed survey, strong on facts but weak on psychology, at least establishes the point that going by precedent hard cash will never cease to pave the way for those fortunate enough to have it.

Middle Class Addictions

A high proportion of those who defect to the West from the Soviet bloc, someone has revealed, are addicts of the detective story, a very western, bourgeois and middle class literary product. The precise implications of this are not easy to sort out but it does suggest that a social history of the crime story as it has developed in the West has been long overdue. Ernest Mandel's *Delightful Murder* (Pluto £3.95) is a bid to cast some light on the evolution of a literary form whose various kinds of escapism are also a mirror-image of the social conditions from which they spring. Solemn interpretations of the deeper meanings of what was originally intended as entertainment can be overdone. Yet there is a fascinating plausibility in Mandel's view that the detective story is a reassurance by and for the middle classes that the sanctity of private property is at the core of any stable civilized society; and that consequently there is the fullest possible ideological justification for the suppression of those who challenge it.

No doubt all the complacencies and certitudes of a prosperous middle class are implicit in the detective novel if one has the patience and ingenuity to analyse it from that point of view. Mandel perhaps pushes the Marxist line a little too far. But in a degree that the genre does not question or examine or support or oppose social conditions but simply reflects them as they are it undeniably remains an index to social history after the thrills it provides have died down. A detective story then entertains, confirms us in our certitudes, and finally, flatters us with the assurance that we have been reading

O round

people who speak interminably about "rights", bleating second hand platitudes from the West with the synthetic conviction of the converted. For such as these in particular Alan White's *Rights* (Oxford £12.50) is strongly recommended. Its predominant virtue is that, unlike most "rights" lobbyists, it asks all the questions that need to be asked even if acceptable answers are not always available. What are rights? Who receives and grants them and on what basis? Are they inherent in anything, or are they a form of privilege conferred in certain conditions? This is a field in which theories proliferate.

Yet a central point which emerges is that a right is no more than an artifice granted by virtue of what a person is and how he is situated; the determining factor is the person and not the right as such. In short there is nothing inbuilt about a right, nothing fundamentalist and beyond the reach of critical scrutiny. It is a device that must constantly justify itself by something more substantial than calling itself a "right". The West has long got over its initial intoxication with "rights" without losing its critical faculties and that is something which some of our more fervent self-styled advocates of "rights" might usefully ponder.

A Collector's Item

All those touched by the mania of collecting antiquarian books will look forward keenly to William Rees-Mogg's *How to Buy Rare Books* (Phaidon Christies £15). It is intended for both beginners and experienced collectors, and has an updated review of how the rare books market works. This is a hobby for which there is not much scope in India where the consumption of rare books by worms has probably been consistently one of the highest in the world. Yet that is no deterrent for the determined collector whose enthusiasm is likely to be kindled further by what this former editor of *The Times* and distinguished book dealer has to say on an addictive and very expensive pastime.

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Does the world go round

social history. Little wonder that the Marxists take a dim view of it and that those communists who succumb to its devious charms tend to jump the wall into the seductive West. Among other things Mandel traces the changing forms of the detective from Lestrade to Holmes to Marlowe to Blake and Superintendent French and innumerable others. What each reincarnation means in social terms is not always clear and Mandel's interpretations are arguable, but one must acknowledge that they have something to do with the subtle

changes in society's manners and a steadily rising level of sophistication. Why, one wonders, is the detective story associated with stable democracies rather than with dictatorships and authoritarian regimes?

What Is "Right"?

Asian societies on which the Westminster type of democracy has been grafted with moderate success are much burdened by

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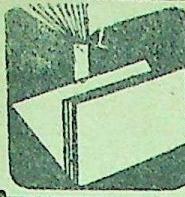
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House of the

Speaking
Volumes



ANYONE interested in or curious about the contemporary Japanese novel has a plenitude of translated material on which to base his research. Nothing like it can be said about the Chinese novel; and when an occasional translation comes one's way it only confirms that one's worst fears are indeed the very worst that anyone can imagine. It is a case of the stereotype being only too true to reality. The wind of liberalisation is said to be sweeping the world of Chinese economics but has evidently left the novelist untouched. Dai Houying's *Stones of the Wall* (Michael Joseph £ 59.95), a novel of university life in Shanghai, has all the identifying features of a product from the central assembly plant. It is obviously dominated by a "line", its dialogue is stilted, its themes are prescribed, its settings are patterned, and its text is littered with the acceptable political jargon of the day. Even its coifed sophistications, as when an impenitible point of view is introduced so that it can be instantly demolished, do not begin to take off; and the whole is flawed by the unrelenting tone of the dedicated ideological moraliser.

The effect is a saddening one in that on the one side it gives point to the dilemmas of the Chinese novelist and, on the other, it is so completely alien to the spirit of the rumbustious traditional Chinese novel. It has, among other things, the no doubt unintended effect of showing that deliberated liberalism can never be mistaken for the real thing. This paradoxically is not a novel, not because it is a tract, but because it is too faithful a reflection of Chinese communist society as it is. With no pretensions to aesthetic quality its other pretensions merit the stereotypical attentions of the China watchers. But it is no more a work of fiction than an editorial written in dialogue form.

A Mysterious Alchemy

Books have often been manufactured on the principle that they in quintessence of a given year can be captured if a sufficient number apart, of its ephemera by way of clippings, one

"uplifting" quality in these lies, a clue to which is contained in the book's title. All these men are risk takers, the implication of which is a willingness to lose all if something goes wrong. This grand acceptance of the possibility of disaster has a non-materialistic dimension that commands respect. It is a part of the intoxication of making money, less of spending or hoarding it; and the people touched by this exhilaration have the dignity of not caring what others think of them. The big money makers, if they are big enough, are redeemed by the risks they take and



SILENT ADMIRATION: A picture of the cock is an emblem of

ings, reports, broadcasts, cartoons, documents, film scripts and assorted snippets are gathered together without any attempt to relate them to each other. By some mysterious alchemy of juxtaposition this process is said to give the year a coherence far sharper than that of any self-conscious definition. Robert Kee tried this in 1939. *The World We Left Behind* and repeats the formula in 1945: *The World We Fought For* (Hamish Hamilton £ 12.95), with results that are conveniently indeterminate. Something like a consensus does emerge from the mass of accumulated detail on which no judgmental verdict is attempted. But one also has the feeling that something vital has slipped through the interstices.

Moreover, though 1939 has the advantage of being on the other side of the war 1945 is the beginning of what is still going on. A chapter that is closed is easier to get the measure of than one that is in the process of unfolding; and it is in equal parts, presumptuous, pretentious and premature to assert that 1945 was the introduction to the world "we" fought for". The allies fought for any particular "world"; however, the idea of a time capsule to be opened in book form - unburdened of analysis or comment or a beguiling one; and, at least, as a memory reference to a good read.

and want in their struggle to better themselves. Was James Cameron a more than usually sophisticated member of this tribe? If he was there were many things that distinguished him from the common run.

He was, more than most journalists, a writer. He evoked, interpreted and concerned himself with those intangibles that make up so much of the reality of Asian societies and which the plain, rugged and unreconstructed reporter is not expected to bother about. He was a likeable man capable, in eastern situations, of an empathy for which most Europeans, even the knowledgeable ones, were ill equipped. Cameron in *The Guardian* (Hutchinson £ 9.95) is a collection of his pieces in the paper in which, next to the *News Chronicle*, he appears to have felt most at home. Haley of *The Times* once remarked that the *Guardian* was

run by people who what was desirable irrespective of the ground where looked at the ground deciding what was literary crack of the he rise. Shelleys, b to the fem hips; Keats, afte Library, than a parking seems that this nevertheless strength of fe has a sp then prime minister's calculation are fe movement. Later and. Their ed his views and ch alive w emergency but on car where he exactly bly he felt too h comments x that does not a good journalism Public Colle writing. In his did collec was saddled with catalogue arguably did him in the role of a more than time foreign Cameron was less Benfield than he is in the other auth says where he doctored States and feeling manuscripts or proper for a in the co The salutes they j Public are as much additional v the man than to roots and nism.

"Hold And Stock"

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ay's students appreciate the Romanticists because they are the first modern writers who could be without looking up.

in literary marketplace, the stock of the Romantic poets has risen.

Shelleys, both Percy and Mary, are holding hips; Byron is holding Keats, after fluctuating, in a second comeback, and Keats is holding a few bob on the ground, who first introduced Shelley at his house in deciding what

Cameron, for example, against India's prime minister, was a parking of his nevertheless strength of the movement. Later he emerged but on where he exactly felt too much at the expense of the gift to the Park Public Library of the former Collection, "Shelley Circle". "It's an absolute collection," he said, "more than a catalogue — the nature itself."

Barker-Benfield and a half-thousand other authorities around the world where he doctored States agreed that the original and feeling manuscripts and 13,000 or more proper for a reissue in the collection at the New York Public Library could be as much additional works about the man than roots and personal lives of writers.

"Hold And stock goes up and geniuses they will always n."

Collecting portraiture has been said, is of books on Shelley, Keats and company because a circle has an attraction for a "feel" which students and readers main reasons, the relevance of genuine art of genuine beauty of their lyricism and possibility of their language. T. Bennett, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at University in Washington.

JADUNATH SARKAR: PROFILE IN HISTORIOGRAPHY: by Dr. Kiran Pawar, Books & Books, New Delhi, 100.

Now, we've only had books written on history of outstanding C. that have passed is one with a difference — he history of a historian — in London — one as accomplished and Amsterdam, Geneve. Each piece is known as Sir Jadunath necessary documents. Recognised the world knighted by the British for exemplary accomplishments in round so on valuable to the field of history, his life story, of functioning and field of collector. Even these pieces are each of their people of their appreciation greatly impressed in the world of form of Chinese tea. Paid at auction and tribute it exacts are such cheaper, is the productions in w. erful appraisals.

FOREVER CONTEMPORARY: John Keats, the Shelleys—Mary and Percy—and Lord Byron.

Poets who never die

Barker-Benfield, the library in charge of the voluminous Shelley papers at Oxford's Library, said the other seems that every English

ton, will bring out her third volume of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's letters this year. Bennett went to Australia, where a Shelley descendant lived, to study the originals of a group of letters for the sake of accuracy and nuance.

"The interest in Mary Shelley continues to increase, particularly because of the feminist movement," Bennett said. "She was a serious and talented writer — Frankenstein was an immediate success. The novel was cited in Parliament. Mary Shelley cannot be considered an appendage to her husband; she must be recognized in her own right. It's sometimes forgotten that she wrote five other novels. Her politics were anti-monarchist and egalitarian — she sought change by education. Mary Shelley even looked ahead to the 21st century in her 1826 novel *The Last Man*. It's about the destruction of mankind by a plague — something like the AIDS epidemic."

Prof. Carl Woodring of Columbia University, author of *Politics in English Romantic Poetry*, attributed the steady interest in the Romantics to the fact that they were emotional poets and sceptics who posed intellectual questions.

"They were certainly involved in politics," Woodring said. "We held a conference recently at UCLA, and some of the Marxist scholars interpreted Shelley as a sort of anarchist. One book on his politics by Paul Foot, a British writer, is called *Rebel Shelley*. Shelley's friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, who was expelled with him from Oxford because of the pamphlet 'The Necessity of Atheism,' memorably described him as 'a pacifist tempered with occasional assassinations'."

"Shelley's influence was important in his lifetime — some of his early works were circulated by radical groups — and it has continued steadily into the 20th century," Woodring said. "George Bernard Shaw was a Shelley fan and considered him as something of an early proto-socialist. It may have helped that both were vegetarians."

Prof. Stewart M. Sperry of Indiana University, author of *Keats the Poet*, said that Keats was also interested in politics, but not to the extent of the other Romantic poets.

Another Keats specialist, Prof. Jack Stillinger of the University of Illinois, who edited *The Poems of John Keats*, added a partisan note: "Keats was the shortest of the poets — 5-feet-one-and-a-half-inch-tall — but he was head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He is the one college students most relate to because of his character. He started out as an ordinary person and a bad poet and became a superb lyricist and a genius."

Stillinger said that students appreciated the Romantic poets because they were the first modern writers who could be read without looking things up.

"They came after the French Revolution and were the most in-

. The Romantic poets came after the French Revolution and were the most inventive craftsmen since Shakespeare. They introduced new forms, new odes, mythological stories. To understand their writings, it's important to learn everything about their lives.

"Shelley and Byron were upper class, Keats was a Cockney, born within the sound of Bow Bells," Sperry said. "Keats never really left England until the end of his life, when he died in Italy. Shelley and Byron were caught up in the European liberation movements but Keats never had a chance to get involved. Although he was the youngest of the circle to die, at 25, his literary heritage is great."

ventive craftsmen since Shakespeare," he said. "They introduced new forms, new odes, mythological stories. They revised traditional Italian rhyme schemes. That is one reason why the original manuscripts are so important. To understand their writings, it's important to learn everything about their lives."

work definitely need a whole book to cover.

While pursuing his historical research Sir Jadunath was never satisfied by mere records and monograms; he went in for originals — be they in the form of manuscripts, letters or original artifacts. He would dig deep and even deeper till he came to the truth of the subject he was pursuing, whatever the hardship he would have to face or the financial losses that it cost him.

One of the quotations in the book aptly describes his powers of perseverance — "I would not care whether truth is pleasant or unpleasant and in consonance with or opposed to current views. I would not mind in the least whether truth is or is not a blow to the glory of my country. If necessary I shall bear in patience the

ridicule and slander of friends and society for the sake of preaching truth, but still I shall seek truth, understand truth and accept truth. This should be the firm resolve of a historian."

Sir Jadunath seems to have jotted down his life, though marred by personal loss, was also as truthful, straightforward and austere.

Dr. Kiran Pawar seems to have worked hard with devotion to a historian whose life she has profiled. A book of interest to th



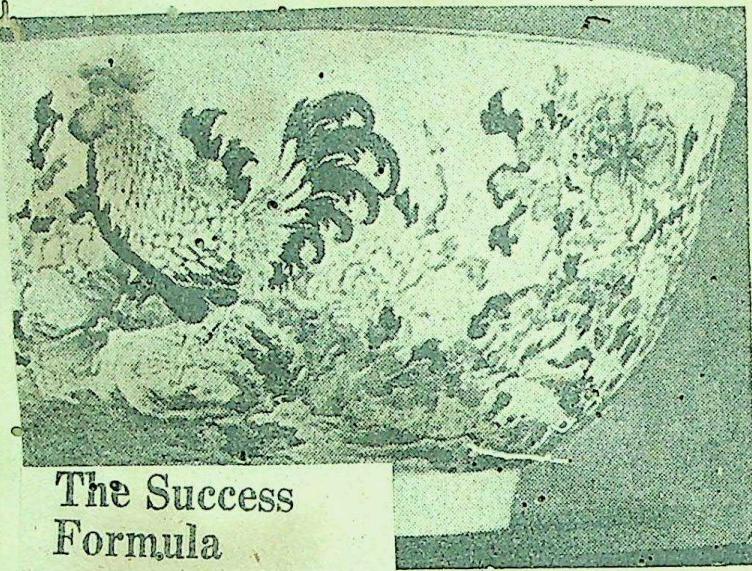
HISTORICAL TRUTH: Jadunath Sarkar

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The way various permutations and combinations. They just do not

It is curable

waning moon



The Success Formula

For every book that tries to pin down the reason for Japan's

success symbolism according to which represents wealth and nobility.

economic success there are at least three others on the careers of the big successful businessmen in the West, written in the hope that in the telling of their often sordid stories something approximating to a formula of success might take shape. Alas, as Jeffrey Robinson's *The Risk Takers* (Allen and Unwin £10.95) shows, there is no standard model from which the hopeful can take their cue, beyond the conventional view that has always ascribed to these success men more than the usual share of opportunism, ruthlessness, self-centredness, drive and cunning. A point of special interest is that many of those whose careers are described here have been associated with fraud, embezzlement and worse but they and their reputations seem to be none the worse for it. Evidently consequences can be much cushioned by wealth; and public esteem can be most easily assured by money in the bank. A second point which the book itself, its contents apart, illustrates is how smoothly one can slip into equating success with money. Yet there is an "uplifting" quality in these stories, a clue to which is contained in the book's title. All these men are risk takers, the implication of which is a willingness to lose all if something goes wrong. This grand acceptance of the possibility of disaster has a non-materialistic dimension that commands respect. It is a part of the intoxication of making money, less of spending or hoarding it; and the people touched by this exhilaration have the dignity of not caring what others think of them. The big money makers, if they are big enough, are redeemed by the risks they take and

their contempt for the safe way out.

A Comedian Guru

Off and on British journalists with an Indian connection are suddenly elevated in this country to guru status for reasons that are inexplicable and baffling. Hindsight has reduced Kingsley Martin from guru to comedian and much the same fate is likely to overcome latter-day members of this "friend of India" cult, dispensing journalistic advice to India, cultivating Indian friendships, fostering and enjoying a reputation for Indian expertise, and offering an abundance of "sympathetic understanding" all Asians are understood to need and want in their struggle to better themselves. Was James Cameron a more than usually sophisticated member of this tribe? If he was there were many things that distinguished him from the common run.

He was, more than most journalists, a writer. He evoked, interpreted and concerned himself with those intangibles that make up so much of the reality of Asian societies and which the plain, rugged and unreconstructed reporter is not expected to bother about. He was a likeable man capable, in eastern situations, of an empathy for which most Europeans, even the knowledgeable ones, were ill equipped. **Cameron in the Guardian** (Hutchinson £9.95) is a collection of his pieces in the paper in which, next to the *News Chronicle*, he appears to have felt most at home. Haley of *The Times* once remarked that the *Guardian* was

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For much of his career Galbraith was a participant but it is as a bystander, in the stands, that he best exemplifies all that is finest in the tradition of intellectual urbanity.

by N. J. Nanporia

GALBRAITH belongs to the tribe of people who habitually look at things closely, determine the way the grain runs and promptly and gleefully go against it. Not that he forms all his opinions in this exclusively cross-grained manner but there is much in this book to support the view that he often seems to do so.

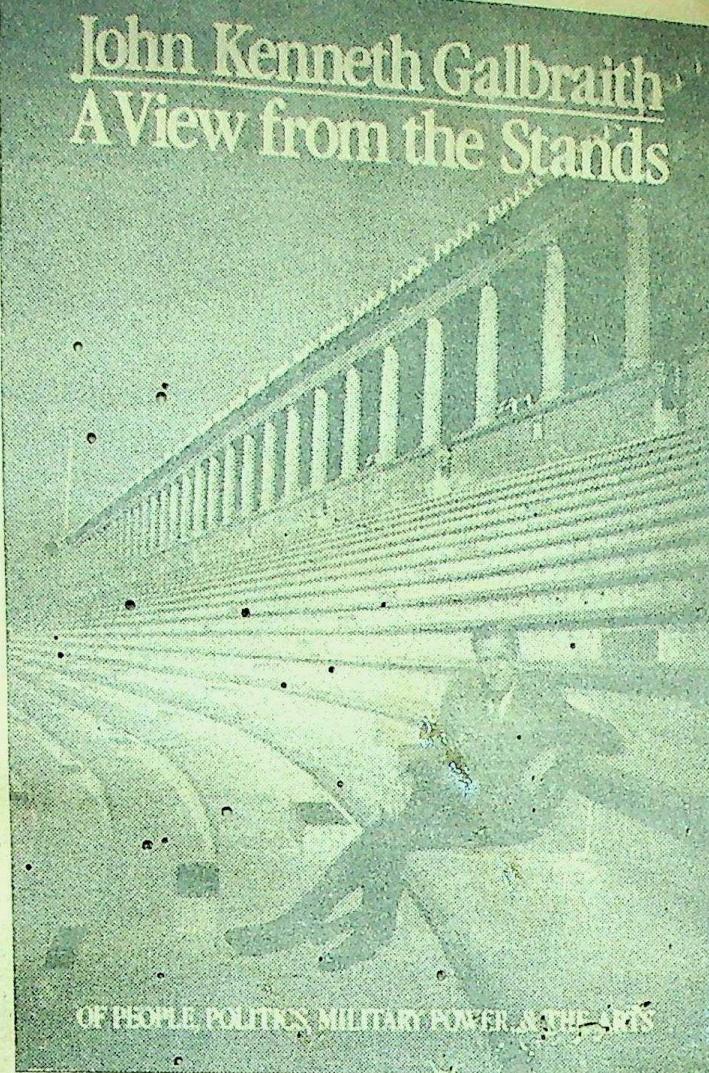
There could not be for him or his reader a more effective recipe against boredom which is why this collection of fugitive pieces, packaged between hard covers for the first time, keeps us constantly on the edge of indignation, protest, amusement, hilarity, agreement, irritation or surrender. On the edge because before a reaction takes shape one is swept on to the next edgy Galbraithian observation until finally, at the end of an article or an introduction to a book or a travelogue or a character sketch or a letter or a biographical note, one is allowed to sit

The Bystander

back and marvel at the exhilaration of it all.

Even when he takes up position, less comfortably than is his wont, within one of the major established conventions as he does in relation to the bomb and arms control and Vietnam, he does so with a pungency that happily subordinates the opinion to the style. Arguably the demands of higher journalism reveal more of the man than his considered work. What we have here is an unofficial autobiography comparable to the published memoir but more informative in many unexpected ways. In the years since most of these pieces originally appeared Galbraith's conclusions and beliefs have been much modified; and it is a tribute to the preservative qualities of his style that despite this the book remains readable, stimulating, relevant and characteristically abrasive.

Perhaps there is a sense here and there of an obligatory abrasiveness, a rather too obvious reaching for the caustic comment, an indulgence in the telling sarcasm, and an over-deliberate response to the expectations from him as a destroyer of received opinions. When he says, for example, that "one should not attribute to bad or devious motives what can readily be



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explained by terminal successionality" he is barely able to conceal his satisfaction at having done so. Similarly, one chuckles over his comment that "all his life Mountbatten was repeatedly sought out by people who wanted less thought and more action both of which he could provide". But one cannot altogether resist the reflection that it is the sting rather than the truth which matters here.

Point Counterpoint

One reason why Galbraith gets away with this sort of thing is his exceptional lucidity. For any given proposition he marshals a number of points in its favour, then marshals a further number of points against, and thereafter demolishes the latter neatly, consecutively, systematically, deliberately and conclusively. He is able to communicate to the reader a sense of having wrapped it up. But where, one soon wonders, is the vast unidimensionality of life which seems to be left out of this syllogistic reckoning?

He calls for the appointment of more "women, blacks, Spanish-speaking citizens and American Indians" in the higher-salary brackets. Yet the implications of prejudice are made the less convincing by the failure to take into

account the untidy fact that these people — as a general rule — are less qualified than white males. This is glossed over by a presumption of equality which is not supported by experience. True, there is no evidence, as Galbraith argues, that women and blacks are intellectually inferior but he does recommend "accelerated development of executive and specialist talent in these groups" the upshot of which is to acknowledge a disqualification that calls for its removal before the charge of discrimination can be established.

Galbraith seems as unpersuasive when he strays into aesthetics with the proposition that art is something "beyond" science and technology, an embellishment of the economic product, an offshoot of industrial progress, that last touch which gives utility a creditable resonance. Well, yes, art as design can sometimes be said to be these things. Yet in giving economics a heavily supportive role in its relation to art Galbraith, the economist, is unduly flattering the profession to which he belongs.

Alternatively he comes perilously close to the platitudinous when he tells us that the artist's master is "his own artistic sense and science". His note on Coo-

maraswamy was flawed by a lack of discovery. The Indian art no introduction to Compt. physicists require of Einstein; and together shake off that his enthusiasm miniatures, Hindu and the British etc. India would be a little more discerning. But then suddenly against a hard kernel sense that seems to be when he comments

In giving economics a heavily supportive role in its relation to art Galbraith, the economist, is unduly flattering the profession which he believes

the Japanese adopted — confidently. So, one senses, did the Indians. But the Indians remain in suspense. Similarly a chain of further speculation is the point that development is based in social cohesion and integration. In consequence lands are deeply involved in most forms of effort". However, the point of this book is that are a responsibility

emnities of economic in this category, rest to Indian to face to a new era. Mill's The History of India the perception are cogently related to contemporary

As someone with realist credentials questioned Galbraith in his administrative role as, on balance, a progressive figure. Attenborough's Ga scintillating as and expect it to be and to agree that the masters are nearer the prototype than the Galbraith on Ken sounds an unconvincing graphic note and a subject on which had second thoughts on Evelyn Waugh's ridge invites the reader to consider that all three share which is recognisably adequately defined challenging fizz.

For much of Galbraith was a person as a bystander that he best example is finest in the intellectual urbanity.

Crisis Facing India

The Soviet Perception

By U.S. BAJPAI

MR DOBRYNIN's visit to New Delhi has taken place at a time particularly critical for India: symbolically troops were out in old Delhi. The Soviet media too has expressed its concern over recent developments here. The *New Times* has summed up the Soviet view in an article entitled "attacks from within, pressure from without". It says: "for weeks the Indian ship of state is being steered by someone into the middle of a sort of Bermuda triangle whose political whirlpools threaten to drag it into the vortex of a dangerous crisis."

Mr Dobrynin is an important figure in the Soviet foreign policy establishment. But he has had little contact with India; he first visited New Delhi as a member of Mr Gorbachev's team last November. The present trip should have helped him to make a personal assessment of the domestic scene and the impact on it of developments in India's international environment.

If the Soviet press is a faithful reflection of Soviet thinking, Moscow can be said to generally endorse the destabilisation theory set out in the Congress working committee resolution of April 18 extracts from which were published in Moscow. However, a careful reading of what has appeared in the Soviet press would show that it does not regard the "foreign hand" as the only culprit.

The article in the *New Times* written on the eve of Mr Dobrynin's visit says that events in India are occurring as in some ingenious detective story in which the plot unfolds in a kaleidoscopic succession of patterns, one more confusing than the other" and therefore, there is no simple answer to the question "what is happening".

"The Indian government", the *New Times* says, "has been having it hard for a long time." The "under-cover" machinations begun by the Fairfax "crowd" and direct pressure by Washington make up the two-pronged attack. The U.S. had hoped that Rajiv Gandhi's policy of modernisation through the latest technology would lead him to Washington and had talked of a "honeymoon". When this did not materialise Washington was disappointed and, since Rajiv Gandhi continued to follow the independent foreign policy of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, it became annoyed: the supercomputers were refused and Pakistan was generously armed. The U.S. was attempting on "splitting the ruling party, to discredit the government and weaken the position of the Prime Minister himself," because of India's anti-imperialist, pro-liberation and constructive disarmament policies.

Virtual Paralysis

It however adds: "In any case, the roots of the present crisis situation in the country should evidently be sought in the economic basis of the dian bourgeois state, for what is in question above all in a conflict between the financial and business interests of two rival monopoly of private capital."

It notes that these events have tended to push into the background domestic and international issues. According to it, "there from the opposition to the debate on the postponed discussion of demands for the 'poorest sections' was suspended; debate on the unity of the nation and of all its

of the national cause, in a way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it."

The way various permutations

religious communities "has been cut short". "The fact of U.S. warships led by the *Kitty Hawk* aircraft carrier having called at Pakistan's port of Karachi in mid-April — a graphic confirmation of the Washington-Islamabad military axis materialising — has passed almost unnoticed. Many plans for India's participation in international activities have been relegated to the background."

This is a picture of virtual paralysis: of course, we may never know Mr Dobrynin's assessment of the situation, but he is reported to have told some members of the AICC at a function arranged by it that a country like India should not entertain fears of destabilisation if it could remain united.

While the Soviet government and media recognise the threats to the Indian state from within and without, they have always regarded Indian society as capitalist and the state as bourgeois. The "machinations" of monopoly capital and multinationals are, therefore, not seen by them as unusual. They are, therefore, stressing in a friendly way that major domestic and international threats should not be allowed to be overshadowed by scandals. Naturally while Soviet comments on India's domestic problems are restrained, they have been more explicit on the external ones.

Common Threat

The spokesman of the ministry of foreign affairs said in Moscow on April 8 that Pakistan was being used as a "place d'armes" by the U.S. for applying direct military pressure on the states of South and South-West Asia and conducting their "undeclared war against Afghanistan". The supply of weapons and the AWACS system to Pakistan would not merely be a means of surveillance and control of neighbouring states, but would "make it possible to undertake dangerous military action against them." These activities would raise tensions in the area and touch upon the security of many countries including India, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

The statement warned: "It must be perfectly clear that the escalation of unfriendly acts against the neighbours of Pakistan, including the Soviet Union itself, will not pass unnoticed." Thus the Soviet perceive a common threat to India and themselves. Mr Dobrynin reiterated this point in Delhi.

The Soviets do not think that Pakistan by itself poses a problem. However, it has been assigned such a vital place in U.S. strategic thinking that even if it wished to get out of its present bind, it would not be allowed to do so. The Soviets recognise the direct threat to India from that quarter, although they feel that the Pakistan nuclear bomb may be some time away.

Pakistan is, on the other hand, also of vital importance to the Soviets as it is crucial to a resolution of the Afghan problem. How anxious they are to bring this episode to an end may be judged from the fact that they are today wooing the former Afghan king, Zahir Shah. Hence the even-handed attitude displayed by Mr Gorbachov during his visit to New Delhi last November. But given the validity of the Soviet assumption that Pakistan is a prisoner of American policy, will the Soviet Union continue to hope that it can be successfully weaned away? There is ground to believe that if the Pakistan government continues on

its present course, the Soviets will consider taking stern measures.

The situation in Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean is also seriously engaging Soviet attention. A senior Soviet Asia expert in Moscow has been quoted as fearing that the situation in Sri Lanka was being manipulated by interests looking for instability in the region, and that it might already be passing out of control. Soviet experts also refer to American efforts to obstruct attempts to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and simultaneously to strengthen their position in it. These experts refer to the fact that while until recently the U.S. cited the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as an obstacle to the process of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, at a recent meeting of the U.N. committee on the Indian Ocean, the U.S. representative raised the Iran-Iraq war as the road-block. Meanwhile the number of U.S. aircraft carriers in the Indian Ocean is increasing and the base at Diego Garcia is being further strengthened. Possibly the Soviets are veering ground to the view that Washington may have retained the Dulles formula of surrounding non-aligned India with hostile states.

There have been several reports from the United States that the Chinese have concentrated an unusual number of troops in Tibet. This is presumably to impress upon India how concerned they are at the possibility of a major incident and to give a broad hint that India should avoid having two major hostile borders, and that it should mend its fences with Pakistan. One is reminded of British and American moves after the 1962 China-India war. The reports of increased Chinese troop concentrations are incidentally not confirmed by Soviet sources.

It may be recalled that during his visit to India, Mr Gorbachov had expressed the view that if there were a continuing improvement in relations between the great powers of the region principally China, India and Soviet Union, he did not foresee the development of a critical situation between India and China. He said, "I think that India, of course, will act very responsibly in this situation" and, in relation with India, "I think that the Chinese government will also act responsibly." While Soviet officials and experts do not rule out the possibility of minor border incidents, they do not anticipate any major intrusion by China.

Warm Reference

There is no evidence of a weakening of Soviet interest in and support for India's independence and integrity. They fully support the present Prime Minister and his government and are known to have advised the communist parties in India to do the same. The discussions during Mr Dobrynin's visit have been intended to impart urgency to measures for stepping co-operation between the two countries in different fields, including defence and particularly surveillance facilities. The Soviet consul-general in Calcutta was reported a few days ago to have hinted that consultations under the Indo-Soviet treaty might be called for. At a dinner in honour of Mr Dobrynin, the minister for external affairs, Mr N.D. Tewari, is also quoted as having made a warm reference to the treaty and expressed gratification that India was not alone at this juncture.

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Messages From China Putting The Screws On India

By A.S. ABRAHAM

THE external affairs minister, Mr N.D. Tiwari's visit to Beijing next month will take place against a background of deteriorating Sino-Indian relations and stalemated official-level negotiations running over six years and through seven rounds. If Mr Tiwari is able to break the ice, the present freeze may eventually thaw.

Realistically, however, too much should not be expected from Mr Tiwari's visit or from any similar attempt by New Delhi to improve Sino-Indian relations. Over the last year or so, the Chinese have been sending New Delhi a series of unfriendly, even belligerent, signals. For instance, on May 7, the *Washington Post* correspondent in Beijing, Daniel Sutherland, quoted a Chinese spokesman, Ma Yushen, as warning India that if it wanted to avoid an unpleasant event, then "the intruding Indian military personnel (from the Sumdorong Chu valley) will be withdrawn as soon as possible so as to relax the tense situation".

There have been other messages. The Chinese have again and again objected strongly to India's decision to upgrade Arunachal Pradesh to statehood. When it did become a state recently, they chose to see it as a provocative action. They have from time to time put across through the western media their dissatisfaction with the way they feel India is going about dealing with them. They have even used some well-connected Indians to make their point.

A former foreign secretary, Mr A.K. Rasgotra, has written: "More recently, I asked a Chinese high official: why did the Chinese come into Sumdorong Chu in force last year? He asked me in return: Why did our forces go there in the first place the previous summer? They too had not been there before. Is that, indeed, the sequence in which events actually occurred? If it is, what harm would it do to admit an error and be done with it? That is the surest way of building confidence between nations which have a history of conflict".

History of Conflict:

Mr Rasgotra seems only too ready to take the Chinese at their word. He ought to have asked the Chinese official what the allegation that Indian troops had arrived into the Valley first was based on. And if admitting an error is "the surest way of building confidence", how can he be sure that it is not the Chinese who are to admit it?

The latest message the Chinese have decided to send India on the dangerous implications of what Beijing sees as New Delhi's aggressive policy appears to have been routed through that notorious Sinophile and Indophobe, Mr Neville Maxwell, who wrote the tendentious history on the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict, *India's China war*. In it, he attributed the conflict to India's belligerence despite its (to him) historical claim to the territories it sought.

An article in the current (May) issue of *South* magazine, prominently headlined, "Towards a Second China War?", Mr Maxwell again argues, with his customary anti-Indian prejudice only evident, that "the indications are

that India has again taken up a collision course with China. With the open door to a negotiated settlement never having been used and armed forces in competition for disputed areas, it appears to be only a matter of time until a clash brings combat with unpredictable international consequences. What can India's motives be?"

Mr Maxwell tries to answer the question by saying, among other things, that India's generals want to wipe out the "stain" of 1962, that, contradictorily, they are being pushed into conflict by a "self-deluded political leadership" that Mr Rajiv Gandhi may see India "as fast becoming ungovernable within the established framework"—India's ungovernability is an old Maxwell Chestnut—and wants to rally the country behind him. He even goes so far as to ask: "more pertinently, perhaps, what could offer a sounder 'justification' for the declaration of a state of emergency?"

Menacing Posture

All the traditional Chinese arguments have been taken over by Mr Maxwell as his own. This strongly suggests that though the article is his, the inspiration is Chinese. He agrees that after the fifth round of talks in Beijing in 1984, the Chinese finally agreed to the sector-by-sector approach on which India always insisted. Instead of a package deal that the Chinese have despised, this, the talks meandered on, at the seventh round in Beijing last July, the Chinese resurrected their claim to the very territory beneath the McMahon line that they were willing to swap for Aksaichin under their package-deal policy. This was the turning-point in the negotiations. Since then, it has been downhill all the way, with the Chinese assuming more and more menacing postures and moving their troops into the Sumdorong Chu near the trijunction of India, China and Bhutan.

China's behaviour indicates that, despite having conceded the validity of the sector-by-sector approach, it is nevertheless set to undermine it in practice; with a view to restoring the package deal idea that Beijing appears to have only ostensibly abandoned. China's opposition to the upgradation of Arunachal Pradesh to statehood as well as its incursions into Sumdorong Chu are part of this strategy. So is its sudden decision to claim some 90,000 sq.kms. of territory in the eastern sector which it was previously prepared to concede India. Mr Maxwell justifies China's *volte face* by saying "it has reminded India that though the Chinese claim can become a bargaining counter in the process of negotiation, in the absence of negotiation, it remains a real claim." This is tantamount to saying that the Chinese should be allowed to eat their cake and have it.

Although the Chinese have been making a series of bellicose statements, they have also been putting out more peaceable messages through a number of intermediaries, Indian and foreign, like the CPM leader, Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who was recently in China and came back convinced that his hosts

had no intention of waging war against India. Nevertheless, other reports speak of the build-up of Chinese forces in Tibet. Such ambiguity is part of China's policy of keeping India on edge.

It would appear that the Chinese have hit upon a two-fold strategy. One is to demonstrate to New Delhi that the sector-by-sector approach on which New Delhi has set its heart will, in fact, create more problems than New Delhi thinks it will solve. By being difficult and belligerent, it hopes to up the ante and induce New Delhi to consider again the "package-deal" approach that Beijing favours. Secondly, the Chinese seem to perceive India as deeply troubled domestically and so vulnerable to pressure. They appear to be arm-twisting New Delhi in the hope that either it will be driven to extremities or be forced to make concessions on the border question that it would not otherwise be able to.

The very arguments that Mr Maxwell advances in support of his contention that New Delhi is deliberately on a collision course with China can be turned on their heads to show that, in fact, it is China which is taking advantage of India's domestic discontents to coerce it into making concessions. Perhaps Mr N.D. Tiwari's visit will be seen by the Chinese as a fruit of such coercion.

In any event, New Delhi cannot afford to drop its guard. Even as it must be willing to go on talking to the Chinese, if necessary at the higher political level the Chinese have indicated they favour, it must be prepared for any move calculated to pressure it at a time when it is both beset by a number of internal crises and faced with an increasingly hostile regional environment.

Bilateral Issue

The deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations, New Delhi's impotence on the Sri Lanka question, the failure so far to reach an amicable agreement with Bangladesh on a host of bilateral questions, including the return of 50,000-odd Buddhist Chakma refugees who have sought a haven in this country, to escape persecution in Bangladesh, the increasing challenge to India's regional predominance that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) presents, Nepal's recent introduction of work permits for foreigners, including thousands of Indians who live and work there, are signs of a regional churning-up which cannot but affect India directly.

Perhaps the Chinese are bluffing. If so, India must call their bluff. That can be done both by making it clear to them that, despite India's internal troubles, the country is well-positioned to deal with military threats of any kind and, at the same time, taking the political initiative to resolve the border dispute peacefully. If seven rounds of official-level talks have reached a dead-end, perhaps the time for such an initiative is opportune. Mr N.D. Tiwari will not be carrying the blueprint for one when he goes to Beijing next month, he should use the visit to sound the Chinese on how they would respond to such an initiative.

THREE has been no let-up in the thunder out of Beijing over the India-China boundary dispute. The latest in a series of Chinese statements bordering on the bellicose is an interview to Mr Kuldip Nayar given by a "top ministerial source" who has chosen to remain behind a curtain of anonymity.

His remarks are basically repetitive, in somewhat greater details, of what the official spokesman of the Chinese foreign office has been saying of late about the situation in the eastern sector. Though New Delhi has emphatically and repeatedly repudiated the Chinese charge of Indian "intrusions" into Chinese territory, he has iterated it. He has also complained that India has "strengthened its forces" in the area, conducted military exercises, "firing over the heads of our soldiers", sent aircraft to "violate Chinese space" and dug trenches.

China, he has added, does not want to see anything "unpleasant" happening on the border but if that happens "it is not China that would have provoked it".

This is threatening talk, ominously reminiscent of the exchanges during the period preceding the Chinese invasion of Ladakh and NEFA (the latter since renamed Arunachal Pradesh) in 1962. Which raises the question whether past history is sought to be repeated. That the Chinese deployments in Tibet today are larger than even in 1962 lends a sharper edge to this question.

Mounting Troubles

It could also be that watching the mounting troubles and turmoil in this country and perceiving the government to be beleaguered, China could well be tempted into believing that with just a little military pressure it could both get a boundary settlement to its satisfaction and make out itself to be the cock of the Asian walk.

Moreover, as before 1962 so now China, too, is having its own internal problems and a major power struggle which remains unresolved. The people's liberation army (PLA), dissatisfied with the reduced resources for its modernisation programme and an important actor on the Chinese stage could well be advocating a low-cost and limited adventure to strengthen its own position.

But while eternal and adequate vigilance must be maintained against all contingencies, there are countervailing arguments to take a more sanguine view of the Chinese tough talk and military movements. It would therefore be wrong to jump to the conclusion that the scenario of an armed conflict along the India-China frontier in the northeast is unavoidable, or even that the Chinese are necessarily spoiling for a fight.

The promptness with which both India and China have contradicted suspiciously frequent western reports about armed clashes speaks for itself. Beijing has also refuted reports about the closure of Lhasa airport to civilian traffic in order to facilitate military reinforcements.

The change in the military situation on the ground since 1962 is both significant and manifest. The Chinese being hard-headed people cannot be unaware of it. Nor can they, especially the PLA chiefs, be forgetful of their bitter experience in pursuance of their desire to teach Vietnam a lesson.

Moreover, the Chinese statements

on the border have to be considered not in isolation but in the wider context of other messages and signals being exchanged by the two sides. Here the picture is completely different from that a quarter of a century ago.

Then there was an across-the-board declaration of hostile intent. Now most of the time the Chinese messages emphasise a desire and willingness to solve all issues, including the border question, peacefully, through mutual discussions and mutual concessions.

On the day Mr Kuldip Nayar's interview appeared in print—it must have taken place in Beijing some days earlier—an Indian trade delegation, headed by the commerce secretary, Mr Prem Kumar, left for the Chinese capital. There are a number of useful suggestions in the fields of commerce and culture that the two sides are keen to implement to mutual advantage. The announcement of Mr N.D. Tiwari's stopover in China was made a few days earlier.

Before the end of this week the new Indian ambassador to China, Mr C.V. Ranganathan, who is an old China hand, will be in Beijing to take up his post. The government's instructions to him are to make it clear to the Chinese leaders that India has not the slightest war-like intent. The former Chinese ambassador to this country, Mr Li Lianqing, was told the same thing during the farewell calls and he reciprocated the sentiment on behalf of his government.

China watchers have noticed that except on the border question the tone of the Chinese press on India has been far from unfriendly and, more often than not, positive. During the border tension between this country and Pakistan, the Chinese media took no sides despite Beijing's known commitment to Islamabad.

Against this backdrop it would be useful to try and understand what is it that is troubling the Chinese or why have they deemed it fit to create tension on a border that has remained, despite the dispute over it, tranquil since 1967 when the last clashes took place.

Different Stands

There are two different stands in the Chinese position which are surely interlinked but should nevertheless be looked at separately. The first relates to the eventual solution of the boundary question and the Chinese complaint is that seven rounds of talks over six years have been lacking in seriousness and therefore sterile.

The second and more immediate problem arises from the question: what is to happen along the disputed frontier until a boundary settlement is reached. Though they have happily accepted the "so-called Macmahon line" as the boundary between China and Burma, the Chinese, for some reason, refuse to accept it in the case of India except as part of their "package deal" which this country cannot possibly countenance on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

However, pending a settlement, the Chinese are willing to respect the line of actual control. Characteristically, they never specify where this line lies but are content to say that it "broadly coincides" with the "so-called Macmahon line". But, far from simplifying things, this complicates them.

The Chinese are sticklers for the line as drawn by Macmahon at Simla. But cartographic techniques

have vastly improved since 1962. This, combined with the fact that on the ground of the highest watershed along the Simla, means that the Macmahon line is in fact somewhat different with what Macmahon thought in those days of cartography.

A number of grey areas in the Sikkim-Chu therefore exist and that is why this issue squarely though, Gandhi and Mr Shiv Shankar (foreign minister) have spoken of the "thick nib" of Macmahon to draw the line after him.

Almost all these grey areas have been left alone by both sides in the disengagement resulting in 1962. There is absolutely no intention to hide the fact that in 1962 a civilian post, manned by intelligence bureau personnel, was set up in the Sikkim-Chu. What an amateurish meaningless exercise it was! It was clear when, at the sight of a snowflake, the IB men made for warmer places. When returned the next summer, found the Chinese entrenched in force and this Chinese has continued all through bleak winter.

Classic Pattern

It was open to the Chinese to object to the Indian post, first saw it. But they did, and decided to react in kind where the classic pattern took over.

Worried about possible intentions, India strengthened its military position in the area, including places which it insists are to the north of the McMahon line. The Chinese, in even bigger reinforcements, may well have mixed motivations. For instance, recently what they saw as an infusion of troops in the fact the return to original formations temporarily to the western front for the Brastacks.

The resultant situation in some places Indian and Chinese patrols come very close to each other. Sometimes the tension and leads to arguments, but on occasions the two sides even shared a cup of tea.

Obviously, such a situation cannot remain static. It must either de-escalate or it is bound to escalate. There is no room for escalation should not be about by both sides agree to restoration of the status quo. This is not going to be acceptable to the Chinese who are paranoidly concerned about face. The fuss over statehood for Arunachal Pradesh would be reflected in Wongdung where they are situated. But then their sincere desire for a peaceful and lasting settlement will be on test.

Another difficulty would be in the status quo. Mr Nayar that the Chinese should go back to the position on November 7, 1959. This is because on that date the Chinese were at Longju (where they have been seen in recent days) and in other grey areas a situation equally fair to both sides would prevail on the day of the series of the border talks.

Political Commentary What Is China Up To?

**The President's Powers
Wrong Comparison And Conclusion**

The written Indian Constitution, where things are explicit, does not make it easy to hark back to British precedents every time a difficulty arises. Difficulties can arise less from genuine lacunae than from lack or failure of good faith, or from a determination to work every little loophole to death, or plain unrealistic absurdity. Awareness of precedents from British experience can nevertheless be useful and instructive, not so much because they yield exact or near parallels, as because they light up the way to some extent, but more because they breathe a spirit so different from our own in a democracy which by common consent has been an exemplary success and which, moreover, furnished the model on which we are supposed to have fashioned our own Constitution.

Somewhere in the corpus of our intricate provisions there is a mandatory injunction to the effect that where explication in any given situation is lacking with respect to any constitutional provision, any resulting ambiguity is to be solved by following British precedents in identical conditions. But conditions are seldom identical, and the injunction may easily before otiose in the hands of contumacious or pernickety legalists. Confessedly, this is an arrangement which can never have a permanent sanction, since we must go on building up our own body of precedents as we proceed in the manner of our case law, and it may be supposed that the need and occasions to draw on British parliamentary practice will go on diminishing until they disappear altogether.

Though Mr Masani's article is replete with references to Parliament, it is remarkable that for the purposes of his argument itself, nowhere in the laboured exercise of his does he allow the reader to suspect that such an entity as Parliament exists, to say nothing of its status as the ultimate tribune. The issue of the violation of the Constitution is a pregnant one. It can never be entirely one between the President and the Prime Minister. A whole intricate institutional framework with procedural impedimenta attached to it, has been contrived with infinite concern for checks and balances in order to preserve stability against competing claims. Of this he seems wholly unaware.

Ultimate Tribune

It seems necessary for his scenario that the whole institutional framework, the power of the judiciary, the autonomy of the states, should be shown to have broken down. Of the party system Mr Masani said in a dialogue with Mr Girilal Jain in these very columns some years ago that it was in its death-throes, and that it was in any case so thoroughly rotten that it didn't really matter whether it died an inglorious death or was saved. All this in the service of persuading us to invest all our hopes in the President seems a bit much. The Constitution can be violated as well by the President as by the Prime Minister, and this ought to be a matter for the judiciary rather than for the judgement of a President who, after all, is a chance creature of chance circumstance and of the peripeteia of our none too clean public life.

MR MINOO MASANI's view (Sunday Review, *The Times of India* of March 29) seems to me rather surprisingly to be heavily infected with the detritus of an unedifying controversy. I suspect he is an unconscious victim of the theory of the wicked Prime Minister and the virtuous President, a theory in principle no truer than its converse, but on the balance of practical probabilities more credibly prone to fall flat. He reveals this bias disarmingly enough in a half-facetious piece of *bardinage* where he claims to have told Mrs Gandhi that he wanted a President who could dismiss her if she violated the Constitution. This bias runs through the whole of his diffuse excursus.

When President Rajendra Prasad first raised the question of the President's powers in an academic form, the matter deserved the attention of experts. The experts, as experts do, differed, but two jurists, the advocate general, Mr M.C. Setalvad, and Mr Justice Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyar, gave their opinion which could be considered definitive. The matter should have ended there, as indeed did as far as the President and the Prime Minister were concerned.

But it did not end for the opposition parties, hungry for power and spoiling for means of making a grab at it by hole-and-corner methods if straightforward ones should elude them. The theme began to be developed, not only that the President has powers that he does not have, but that he should be armed with powers where he is powerless, all in the service of making things easy for the opposition parties in their bid to ride to power. The situation at the moment remains somewhere at this point.

Mr Masani is different. He may reasonably be thought to be exempt from motives and drives now at work among the political parties. But what does his case amount to? He has quoted Dicey. He has mentioned Keith and Jennings in support, but he has not quoted them. But Dicey, Keith, Jennings and the rest, distinguished men all, and their works, are authorities to students taking a course in constitutional law, and perhaps to other jurists. They are worthless in settling any constitutional point if an actual crisis should develop between the Crown and a ministry.

British History

Neither the King (or Queen) nor the ministry will stop to ask: "What does Professor Dicey say? Or Keith or Jennings?" Of Professor Dicey in particular, Professor S.E. Finer, another authority, says that his reputation is undeserved and that his opinions are perverse.

The constitutional battle in British history have all been between Crown and Parliament, individual ministers were involved only incidentally. More to the point is the fact that the British constitution is an uncodified one. To settle a constitutional point between Crown and Parliament or a ministry, five different sources are available for consultation, and they include none of Mr Masani's authorities. These are: (1) statutes or acts of Parliament; (2) judicial pronouncements on the meaning of the relevant words in a statute; (3) the principles of common law; (4) the *lex et consuetudo parliamenti* which protects members of Parliament from "molestation"; (5) this element is not

written down or codified at all, but is a set of usages, not judicial rules. It is referred to as the *conventions of the constitution*. "the conventions", says Professor S.E. Finer, "are rules of practice and interpretation which by their antiquity and utility have acquired a normative, a binding quality".

Dicey, Jennings, Keith and the rest are at liberty to draw inferences and conclusions from all this to what might or could be. But their opinions are just as fallible as yours or mine. No doubt they all help to build a colourable, if factitious, ambience around an intrinsically bad case, as does Mr Masani's mention of the instrument of instructions which, after all, was not adopted and the private conversations with ex-presidents which he recounts. He even quotes Mr Nehru who, in substance, flies straight in the face of all that Mr Masani has maintained.

Mr Nehru's speech on July 21, 1947 in the Constituent Assembly in which he quotes (the date seems to me, as printed, obviously wrong, but let that pass), though the final meaning is clear enough, is unfortunately, imprecisely worded. Power, he says, really resides in the ministry and in the legislature. At the same time, he says, the President is not a figurehead (what else?). We did not give him any *real power* (emphasis mine), he says, but we have made his position one of great authority and dignity. (Dignity, yes, but what authority?)

Experts' Consensus

The fact unquestionably is that the President is both a figurehead and, figuratively, a rubber stamp. Figureheads and rubber stamps have their uses, otherwise they would not be in use at all. And they are in use because, eking out with pomp and circumstance, they exude a diffuse, impalpable surrogate authority. Imagine a passport without its rubber stamp!

There is nothing in the Indian constitution which says that the President can overrule the advice of a Prime Minister backed by his indispensable parliamentary credentials. Mr. Masani's seeming conviction to the contrary is entirely inferential, derived from the dictionary meaning of the word "advice" which, he claims, means that the person advised can take it or leave it. Leave it, he can, at a price. But he cannot act. He must, in effect, go. Under Article 74(1) which Mr Masani himself quotes, the operative words are that the President is required to act in all matters "with the aid and advice of his council of ministers".

Mr Masani has referred to an experts' consensus in Britain about the Crown's unfettered discretion to accept or reject the Prime Minister's advice. To my perception, the qualifying word "unfettered" renders the consensus, if there be any such, self-evidently absurd. But all this is mere work of supererogation, like a horse growing a fifth leg or an additional tail. Some antique powers do inhere in the crown, often only vestigially, like its power to wage war, or to order invasion of a foreign country regardless of Parliament, but, as Professor Maitland points out, "without Parliament's consent, given year by year, no standing army can be kept on foot. Without the grant of supplies, the King will have no money... thus Parliament and, in particular, the House of Commons, has a most efficient check upon the King's action."

By M.G. BAILUR

THE President's Powers Wrong Comparison And Conclusion

By M.G. BAILUR

of the national cake, increasing the way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

President &

Sir.—Congratulations on the article "President & obligations" (April 1). It is easy enough to see the clamour of those who would like the President to assert himself, and the Prime Minister, it has been seen, has not been able to do that. That does not justify a President who indulges in exposure and exercises. In this would be already strained fabric of constitutional democracy in India.

The reality has to be faced. Whether in India or Britain, simply cannot be "two heads of state or monarchs". Power will continue to rest in the person—the President or the Prime Minister—unless there is a switch-over. Presidential system could be a ceremonial head, notwithstanding all the glamour and trapping of high office.

Unlike in Britain, where the President, with his functions, is an active member of a party and gives his influence to his being in the good books of the ruling caucus. Any discord between the President and the Prime Minister may bring down to the level of a "fam" or (if wrongly advised) magnified out of all proportion a national issue. But when it settles down, it is obvious that 'discords' are usually a mere clash of personal egos or astute political calculations.

B.R.R.

Bombay

Political Commentary

Focus On Pak Bomb And China

By INDER MALHOTRA

IT is a small mercy that the Rs 12,512-crore defence budget was saved, at the last minute, from being "guillotined" along with the sundry appropriations which have been passed by the Lok Sabha undiscussed.

But the seven-hour defence debate that followed was discursive, scrappy, rambling, and, at times, disappointing. It was also badly fractured, having been spread over three days, not counting the intervening weekend.

Even so, such are the stark and compelling realities of this country's strategic environment and the security threats to it that the debate, for all its shortcomings, immediately zeroed in on the two paramount issues of the day: Pakistan's nuclear bomb, which the Pakistanis themselves sometimes call the "Islamic bomb", and China. Both are lasting issues of profound significance and discussion on them is bound to go on.

For the present both the issues have been defined with reasonable clarity and the government's response to them, far from being dismissive or evasive, as it could well have been, judging by past experience, has been realistic enough. This is something to be grateful for.

To Mr H.M. Patel (Janata) goes the credit for putting the nuclear question in proper perspective. His credentials authoritatively to speak on the subject are impeccable. He was India's first defence secretary and continued to be involved in problems of national defence as principal finance secretary later. During the 30 months of the Janata government, he was a member of the cabinet's committee on political affairs (C.C.F.A.) which discusses and decides all issues of defence and national security.

Nuclear Option

No wonder then that his eloquent plea that India should exercise the nuclear option without delay and refuse to be distracted by the various red-herrings being drawn across the trail has been listened to with respect even by those who do not necessarily agree with him.

It is also remarkable that no participant in the Lok Sabha debate questioned Mr Patel's prescription. On the contrary, Mr K.P. Unnikrishnan (Congress-S), while refraining from endorsing Mr Patel's plea, made the pertinent point that the acquisition of nuclear weapons capability by Pakistan must be viewed in the context of the nuclearisation of the Indian Ocean and the establishment of the Diego Garcia base as well as the U.S. Central Command. What he did not add but should have is that the nuclear might of the Soviet Union and even more so of China is also relevant to this country's nuclear policy.

Had Indian Parliament followed the procedures of the U.S. Congress, someone ought to have read into the parliamentary record the Chandigarh lecture of Lieutenant-General S.K. Sinha, vice-chief of the army staff, who has spoken lucidly and in the broadest historical perspective, of the grim consequences of nuclear asymmetry in South Asia.

Against this backdrop Mr K.C.

Pant's response acquires significance. Prefacing his remarks with a terse reference to the U.S.-Pakistan-China "linkages" with "anti-Indian overtones", he spoke about the Pakistani bomb briefly and with great care. There was, however, no mistaking his message that the "emerging nuclear threat from Pakistan is forcing us to reconsider our options". India, he added, would adopt a response "adequate" to its perception of the threat. Beyond that he would not say anything which is how things should be because in today's world ambiguity is the best part of nuclear policy.

Witness the consummate skill with which General Zia-ul-Haq and his cohorts have played this game. Even while unveiling their bomb in the basement they have blandly pretended that any imputation of nuclear ambition to them is the outcome of a sinister "Zionist conspiracy".

Zionist Conspiracy

It is inconceivable that a minister of Mr Pant's background would have made the statement on nuclear policy without proper clearance from the Prime Minister and perhaps from the CCPA.

Even so, a further affirmation of this policy will be needed if only because of the government's propensity in the recent past to shift from one position to another and even more deplorable tendency on the part of different limbs of the government to speak in different voice and work at cross-purposes.

The lack of co-ordination between the ministry of defence, the foreign office and the Prime Minister's office is as chronic as it is catastrophic. Dissatisfaction with this state of affairs found an echo during the Lok Sabha debate but only cursorily. Gen Sinha has been more outspoken. The ministries of defence and external affairs, housed cheek by jowl in South Block, he regrets, are virtually oblivious of each other's existence.

One does not know what the other is doing.

Nothing underscores this more vividly than that some smart alecs in the external affairs ministry as well as elsewhere in South Block, pretending or at least hoping to have the Prime Minister's ear, have of late been advocating that this country should sign the NPT. A more disgraceful attempt to pervert all that this country has stood for cannot be imagined.

China's clandestine help has almost certainly hastened Pakistan's success in building the bomb without having to test it. But India-China relations, critically important by themselves, have to be considered independently.

Even at the risk of stressing the obvious the point must be made that while all that goes on in India's open and noisy society is fully known to China, internal debates within China remain shrouded in mystery.

The Chinese cannot be unaware therefore of the change of mood in this country within a short span of 12 months. During last year's defence debate a CPM member, Mr Amal Dutta, could make the astounding statement that China had "done no harm to India" and

more or less get away with it. This time so great and widespread was the concern over China's past actions and future intentions that Mr Dutta prudently stayed away from the House and let his comrade, Mr Kurup, take part in the debate.

At the same time, the Chinese must also have noticed the virtual consensus that there was no military solution to the India-China boundary question which ought to be settled through "patient diplomacy".

This does not and cannot mean that this country will accept a border settlement on whatever terms the Chinese choose to offer. Nor is it realistic to expect that with the settlement of the boundary issue all friction would disappear. The experience of so many countries which have no border problem with China and yet have come to grief speaks for itself.

In spite of all this, a border agreement and better relations with China are worth having for their own sake, and this has indeed been Indian policy ever since the beginning of 1968, when Indira Gandhi offered to talk to China without any preconditions such as the insistence, until then, on the implementation of the Colombo proposals.

But, as Mr Pant, who has had the benefit of a brief stopover in Beijing only the other day, told the Lok Sabha, "all best of efforts have so far failed to yield any progress in the talks with China."

Even more intriguing than the Wongdong intrusion is the enormous fuss the Chinese continue to make about the grant of statehood to Arunachal Pradesh. In sharp contrast to this, they had said nothing when in 1972, NEFA was converted into Arunachal Pradesh and made a Union territory directly governable by New Delhi.

Is it that Beijing had one view of India in the wake of the Bangladesh war and quite another today because of the spectacle we have made of ourselves?

Enormous Fuss

An inkling into the possible Chinese thinking has been provided by Mr A.R. Venkateswaran, the former foreign secretary, as well as a former ambassador to China. He says, accurately enough, that the two countries had come close to clinching a border deal first in 1983, and then two years later but both opportunities were lost causing frustration in Beijing.

But then should not the stalemate be broken "by picking up the snapped threads instead of indulging in mutual recrimination, making threatening noises and creating avoidable tension".

The Chinese are hard-headed people though they did make the mistake of trying to teach Vietnam a lesson and received a bloody nose in the bargain. They must know that 1962 cannot be repeated a quarter of a century later. A few more Wongdong-type intrusions into soft spots in the north-east are, of course, possible. But there cannot be a quick advance to the foothills. Moreover, even footling little intrusions can create great vulnerability for the intruders.

This is something which should be pondered as much by the faint-hearted in this country as by policy-makers in Beijing.

of the nation's fate in the way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

ments

priorities. The kind of damage that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Political Commentary

After The Bofors Gun-Fire

By INDER MALHOTRA

AT the time of writing the Bofors issue appears to have been fought to a standstill. Mr Rajiv Gandhi's government has categorically contradicted the Swedish state radio's allegation that Bofors, the Swedish arms conglomerate, had bribed "senior Indian politicians and key defence figures" to clinch the \$ 1.3 billion deal to sell India 155 mm field gun.

It has also invited the opposition, the Swedish radio or anyone else to furnish any evidence of wrong-doing and promised, in such an event, to hold an inquiry and punish the guilty, "however high he might be".

The offer is a fair one. But the opposition, despite its sound and fury, seems singularly bereft of ammunition. It is waiting hopefully for the Swedish radio reporters to carry out their threat to release the documents and details of Swiss numbered accounts said to be in their possession to buttress the charge that has been denied not only by the government of India but also by the government of Sweden as well as Bofors.

Fair Offer

Leaders of most opposition parties have made much of the fact that the government's credibility is low. This indeed is their main justification for their demand for a parliamentary probe. The government, they say, has to do more than it has in order to clear its name. The Prime Minister's own lament at the convention of the Indian Youth Congress, that the people were being "led to believe" the Swedish radio reports in preference to the denials by both Indian and Swedish governments, speaks for itself.

It also underscores the difficulties he and the party he leads face in coping with a situation which they perceive to be the outcome largely of relentless efforts by inimical forces, internal and external, to destabilise India by destabilising the present Indian leadership.

No objective observer of the current scene can fail to notice or pretend to overlook the grim threats with which India is sought to be hemmed in. In the circumstances, any campaign to tarnish the image of the leadership, destroy its moral authority and thus generate in the country a mood of doom and gloom can only comfort those who do not wish India well.

The other, equally important, side of the same coin is that high-ups in the power structure, especially Mr Rajiv Gandhi's cronies and confidants, should not only be cleared but also should be seen to be clear. Like Ceasar's wife, they ought to be above suspicion. Should any of them turn out to be vulnerable to charges of malfeasance and worse, they, rather than the Prime Minister's worst enemies, would prove to be the main agents of the destabilisers.

Mr K.C. Pant, the new defence minister, who replied to the Lok Sabha Bofors debate with conspicuous skill and restraint, was entirely right to say that destabilisation was a reality and should not be dismissed as a "figment" of someone's imagination. He hastened to add that this did not mean that

charges of wrong-doing or misconduct ought not to be made if they were warranted. What was required, however, was that such charges be made after careful thought and "with due sense of responsibility".

Unfortunately, Mr Pant's moderation and perspective are not shared by many including some at least of his colleagues in the council of ministers. Good sense about what is good for the country has become the first casualty of the prevailing partisan passions and perfervid mutual denunciation, especially over the dual issues of destabilisation and corruption in high places.

Maybe the opposition stalwarts who reject the talk of destabilisation out of hand know not what they are doing. But what is one to make of the ruling party's own astonishing performance? Its overblown rhetoric, first at what has jocularly been called the "Working committee plenum" and then during the Lok Sabha debate on the Bofors affair quickly turned into overkill. Hyperboles in the Working Committee's resolution looked like being unsurpassable. In the event they were surpassed during the speeches from the Congress benches which reached their crescendo in Mr Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi's jingoistic intervention, more suitable for the Calcutta Maidan than for the Lok Sabha chamber in New Delhi.

Indeed, the whole exercise is in dire danger of becoming what the Americans call counter-productive. One of the Congress Party's objectives in switching back to the slogans and cliches of the late sixties and early seventies was obviously to win back the lost support of the Communist left. What was implicit became explicit during the speeches of Congress MPs who repeatedly appealed to the comrades to recognise the perils confronting the country and rally round Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

These appeals were tersely turned down by both Mr Somnath Chatterjee (CPM) and Mr Indrajit Gupta (CPI), one of whom deplored them as an unworthy attempt to "divide the opposition".

Black Curtain'

A lot more will doubtlessly be heard in days to come about both destabilisation and the Bofors deal. It will be foolhardy for anyone to try to predict the course of events. But, irrespective of whether it turns out to be baseless or whether it yields startling disclosures, the flurry over the West German submarine and the Swedish field gun will have served a very useful purpose if it can persuade the government to rescind what is being advertised as a great reform in the procedure for negotiating and concluding arms deals.

On the face of it, the 1980 decision to abolish agents and middlemen between the government and foreign arms suppliers seems a very good one which should explain the self-righteous emphasis placed on it by Mr Arun Singh first and then by Mr K.C. Pant.

But the proposition that the abolition of middlemen (assuming that the other side follows the same policy which the Swedish government evidently did though nothing

has been said on behalf of the West Germans) eliminates all possibilities of bribery, payoffs and kickbacks cannot bear scrutiny.

On the contrary, a case can be made out that the abolition of agents (other than providers of "logistical support" such as booking of hotel rooms and making of appointments) is rather like the ban on company donations to political parties which has had consequences wholly opposite to the advertised ones.

Just as the outlawing of company donations has established a catastrophic, under-the-table nexus between black money and politics, so the abolition of open and therefore accountable agents has left the field clear for hidden persuaders to get into the phenomenally profitable act and operate from behind what the Japanese so expressively call the "black curtain".

In any case, what disability does the government's much-touted ban impose on such undeclared and unacknowledged middlemen? Simply that they cannot be received in the cloistered sanctum of South Block where the defence ministry is housed. But then what does this matter to someone with enough clout and savvy to be able to pull off transactions worth billions of dollars as part of the day's work? He prefers to enliven the scene in five-star hotels or well-appointed private residences.

Agonising Question

The defence ministry's faith in the efficacy of a ban on entry into its premises may be undying but it is pathetic. Some years ago when the distressing case of espionage, involving the Larkin brothers, one a retired major-general and the other a retired air vice-marshal, came to light, the ministry blandly announced that it had plugged the source of leakage by withdrawing from retired service officers the right of access to the defence library. Parliament shook—but only with laughter.

Another agonising question has been thrown up by the recent sensation over alleged slush funds. It relates to the employment taken up with arms suppliers, foreign and indigenous, by retired military top brass. The name of a former chief of the naval staff has cropped up in connection with the West German submarine presumably because his firm provides the submarine's manufacturers with "logistical support".

Lieutenant-general (retired) S.K. Sinha has written ruefully about a former air chief being in the employ of a foreign supplier of military aircraft.

Nor are former service chiefs and other senior armed forces officers the only ones to be so employed. In the late sixties, a former defence secretary took up an assignment with a very big west European armaments firm. A decade later, he was recalled from retirement and appointed principal secretary to the then Prime Minister.

In none of the cases cited here were any laws or rules contravened. Even so, the current practice is far from healthy and is ripe for a review.

The Destabilisation Theory

Indian Preference For Confusion

By DILEEP PADGAONKAR

CONFUSION seems to provide the maximum scope for sanity in India. We are able to examine any issue with a flair for nuance and even for daring generalisations so long as it remains blurred. But we tend to lose our bearings as soon as it is brought into sharp focus. Our discourse can then assume the proportions of a paranoia. The reactions to the Congress Working Committee's "destabilisation" resolution of April 18 offers a striking example of our innate belief that clarity is an implacable foe of reason.

For all its drawbacks, the resolution could have provided as good an occasion as any to size up the domestic and external forces which are engaged in a complex play in and around the country. But it failed to inspire any such debate. While the opposition and most sections of the press held it up to ridicule, members of the ruling party treated it as some sort of edict that explained, justified and lent legitimacy to its doubts and fears.

'False Theory'

As a people we value consistency in politics even more than coherence. The CWC resolution drew fire from so many sides precisely because it marked a breath-taking somersault for the ruling party and not for the thesis it advanced. Over the past two years the Rajiv Gandhi government had in effect conferred on "pragmatism" the status of a dogma. In the process, the Prime Minister had relentlessly denigrated policies, conventions and institutions that had stood the test of time. No opportunity was missed to make the nation vulnerable to all sorts of pressures.

But with a single stroke the resolution not only denied that any of these things had happened but it also had the gall to proclaim that the country had not budged from the Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi framework. The flirting with the West, particularly the United States, and the coy seduction of multinationals and non-resident Indians were dismissed as a "false theory" put out by neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism. Instead the resolution projected Mr Gandhi as the "conscience of humankind in its struggle for peace, for survival against the nuclear winter", as the "champion of the black people" and as the "spokesman for equality and justice in international economic relations."

Forgotten, too, was the upbraiding of the public sector, the strident criticism of the scientific community, the encouragement given to the "screw-driver" economy and the massive imports of luxury consumer items to the detriment of the indigenous industry. The resolution emphasised instead that under Mr Gandhi's stewardship "the planning system was strengthened, the war on poverty intensified, the public sector revitalised and the momentum for self-reliant industrial and agricultural growth kept up in the face of heavy odds." What is more, the

"inter-connections between the independent foreign policy of non-alignment and the domestic imperatives of growth with social justice were faithfully respected."

If all this strained one's sense of credulity, the timing of the resolution only strengthened the impression that it was a panic *réflex*, an imposture, a bogey raised to divert attention from the ruling party's *fauç pas* and alleged acts of misdemeanour. The reactions of the opposition were, therefore, predictably hostile while those of the party faithful ranged from cynicism to bewilderment.

And yet, alarmed by the rush of developments since the publication of the President's letter to the Prime Minister and the subsequent revelations of the Fairfax affair and the defence deals, the party faithful clutched on to the resolution much as the ship-wrecked clutch on to a life-buoy. Overnight words that had fallen from grace and sullied labels from the past were back in circulation with dizzying vehemence. All in all, there was little to choose between the righteous anger of most opposition parties and large sections of the press, on the one hand, and the paranoia cultivated by the ruling party on the other.

Still, for all its over-blown rhetoric, the resolution does raise some real issues. The succession of events since the publication of the President's letter, regardless of their origin, has brought intolerable pressures to bear on the government. And these have coincided with grim developments in our neighbourhood. Whether the coincidence is fortuitous or whether there is, as the CWC resolution states, a "grand design of destabilisation (which) is being implemented with meticulous attention to detail" is hard to say. But the fact of the coincidence, and its likely consequences, can simply not be dismissed out of hand.

Bipartisan Consensus

Nothing has driven home this point more forcefully than the approval given by the U.S. Senate's foreign relations committee last week to the \$ 4.02 billion aid package for Pakistan proposed by the Reagan administration. That such an approval was obtained in a body dominated by the Democrats should come as a sobering lesson to those who had placidly believed that there was no bipartisan consensus in Washington about the strategic importance of Pakistan to the United States. It matches the importance the U.S. accords to only one other country — Israel.

The consensus marks a significant victory for President Reagan inasmuch as it vindicates a strategic line he has pursued since the very start of his presidency in 1980. In the wake of the revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the U.S. administration jettisoned once and for all any pretence that it wished to conduct an even-handed policy as regards Pakistan and India. It chose to focus exclusively on Pakistan and directly involve it in its strategic design in the

region.

That choice may have become somewhat blurred in 1982 following the enthusiastic welcome given to Mrs Gandhi during her visit to the United States and again in June 1985 when Mr Rajiv Gandhi was welcomed in that country even more effusively. Both these periods coincided with growing domestic difficulties within Pakistan, on the one hand, and a relaxation of tensions between Indian and Pakistan on the other. And on both occasions Washington encouraged regional co-operation in the area under its obvious auspices.

However, even during this period, the United States did not lose sight of the need to ensure the defence of its interests first. Having failed to "allay Indian fears that our interest in south-west Asia is inimical to hers and that Pakistan is the spear carrier for some Sino-U.S. conspiracy to undermine Indian influence in South Asia," the administration reverted to its earlier stance of strengthening its strategic alliance with Islamabad.

Stumbling Block

Alongside, as in the West Asia, in South Asia too Washington has sought to find other allies and friends to neutralise the Soviet Union. Just as it has built a network of pro-U.S. Arab states around Israel as it were, it has managed to forge a similar network of anti-Soviet states in South and South-East Asia round Pakistan. In other words, from Turkey to Thailand only three countries are stumbling blocks to the implementation of President Reagan's strategic design — Iran, Afghanistan and India.

In the light of this, could it be a mere coincidence that among those who have been in the forefront of the onslaught against the government figure those who have pleaded vociferously not so much for closer ties with the United States but for an entente with Pakistan, a firmer stand against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and, no less significant, for some kind of a formal diplomatic relationship with Israel? The arrangement, it is needless to add, would suit the United States perfectly. Despite its contradictory nature, the proposed arrangement had the merit of addressing itself to India's fears and ambitions — playing on its attachment to democracy, its desire for peace with the neighbours, its craving for regional pre-eminence, its abhorrence for communism and its fears of a superpower lodged just across the Khyber. With a confused but appealing package like that who would settle for the clarity and coherence of the CWC resolution? In the absence of hard facts and reasoned argument, who would want to believe that "the events of the last six weeks establish beyond doubt a pattern of destabilisation in which the external forces hostile to India have been revealed to be inextricably linked with the internal forces of political and economic subversion?"

India's Regional Role

Satish Kumar

India's Regional Role

Steady Erosion Of Leadership

By A.S. ABRAHAM

FOR a country that aspires to regional leadership, India presents a sorry spectacle right now. Since before the current series of controversies broke out, it has been beset with myriad problems: a secessionist movement in Punjab; a widening communal divide, with disputes such as that over the Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid holy site becoming focal points of religious strife; continuing insurgency in the north-east, with a fresh ingredient in this bubbling pot in the form of the Gorkhaland agitation; other kinds of parochial conflict like the dispute over what Goa's official language should be, the as yet unresolved Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary quarrel, and the intermittent eruptions of intercaste warfare in Gujarat and elsewhere. Coming on top of all these, the present controversies can only reinforce the image of a floundering giant so weakened by domestic difficulties as to be unable to act coherently.

These troubles are occurring even as relations with our neighbours are deteriorating. If there is a perception that the country is steadily losing its will and its capacity to fashion a regional environment conducive to its leadership, then that perception can only be buttressed by the concurrence, albeit accidental, between domestic crisis and regional uncongeniality.

In Sri Lanka, where Indian regional leadership, or at least the aspiration to it, faces a serious and immediate test, events have been moving more and more over the last few months beyond New Delhi's control. Since the December 19 proposals were put on the table, its mediation between Colombo and the militants as well as the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has come to a standstill. As the bloodletting grows, the ethnic conflict is being resolved in the killing fields rather than at the table. New Delhi seems powerless to pressure both Colombo into conceding more than it will and the militants into resuming the stalled negotiations. The embargoes of asthma continues, the unilaterally suspended Sri Lanka military offensive has been renewed, the militants are preparing for further resistance.

Rapid Descent

Had New Delhi been less preoccupied with its own, undoubtedly much more urgent, concerns, it might have been able to halt the rapid descent into fresh confrontation by bringing the warring sides face to face in discussions. Now, even its statements of good intent lack the credibility they had until recently. All its exhortations to the combatants to heed its advice to stop fighting and start talking are ineffective because it is itself seen as too assailed by its own crises to be in any position to help resolve the conflicts of others.

The same holds good for Bangladesh. The 25,000 mainly Buddhist Chakma refugees from that country who have sought a haven here were supposed to have gone back to Bangladesh after January 15. In fact, not only have the arrangements for their return broken down, but more Chakmas have come in (the number is now over 48,000), and more are on the way. To cap it all, the Bangladeshi government questions the Indian figures and puts the number of refugees much lower.

In addition, Dhaka is making out

that the Chakmas are being treated miserably in Indian refugee camps and that India has no intention of sending them back *en masse* because it wishes to continue to embarrass the Ershad regime. In any case, Bangladesh has long alleged that the Chakma rebellion is India's handiwork. Although Amnesty International has documented human rights violations in the Chittagong hill tracts, the home of the Chakmas, and although this is believed to be due to the deliberate colonisation of the tracts by Bengali Muslim settlers as part of Dhaka's policy there, Dhaka is unfazed.

Again, had New Delhi not presented a picture of disarray, its attempts to resolve the issue amicably and in a manner that serves India as well as Bangladesh interests might have been more effective. As it happens, the widening gap between India's aspirations to regional leadership and its capacity actually to lead is ensuring only that more and more regional problems are stalemates, more often than not to India's disadvantage. As the biggest country in the area and one with which every other state has to deal, India's condition is of more than passing concern to its neighbours. When it is convulsed by domestic upheavals, or the prospect of them, the regional consequences, for it as much as for them, can only be grave.

Domestic Upheavals

Only some days ago, the Nepalese government ordered all foreigners working in the country, including Indian citizens, to apply for work permits. The order is effective from April 14. Thousands of Indians will be directly affected. But, more importantly, although the move may not be aimed at people from this country alone, it must be seen in the context of Nepal's desire to get out of the "special relationship" with India that has existed since the 1950 Indo-Nepalese treaty and to deal with this country no differently from the way it deals with others. In particular, Nepal wishes to have the freedom of manoeuvre within South Asia, including China, that it feels the 1950 treaty denies it at a time which it hopes it will get especially through the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) whose administrative headquarters is in Kathmandu.

Similarly, Nepal's "zone of peace" proposal, which it has got a number of countries to endorse, is ostensibly aimed at keeping superpower or regional rivalries away from its soil and to ensure that it can do its own thing without having to worry about external interference in any form. In fact, again, the effect of the proposal will be to dilute the special relationship that Nepal has with India. Not surprisingly, New Delhi is reluctant to back the "zone of peace" concept.

As regards Pakistan, there can be no doubt that it is today, militarily and politically, extremely well-placed to challenge Indian claims to regional leadership. The American shoring-up of the Zia regime after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 has ensured that. Without that assistance, Pakistani nuclear ambitions might have been further away from realisation than they are, while its regional and strategic clout would also have been less impressive. Nor would it have been able to strengthen its forces to the extent it was able to do as a result of the \$ 6 billion it has been given since 1981, with a further \$ 4

billion in prospect.

China's hardening of its stance on the Sino-India border question over the last year or so, despite the continuing talks between the two countries to resolve it, has also put pressure on India. The Chinese refusal to accept Arunachal Pradesh as a legitimate part of India, their intrusion in the Sikkim-Chu valley, and reports that they may be planning similar moves once the snows melt point to an augmentation of that pressure. Some doubts have arisen about China's hostile intentions following the Union minister of defence, Mr K.C. Pant's visit to Beijing last week. But even if China is not planning military operations on any scale against this country, the border question is still far from being resolved and continues to be a sore point in the Sino-Indian relationship.

What all this adds up to is that India appears to be less well-placed than before to play the role of regional leader and to be accepted as such by its neighbours. This is not only because of the numerous problems confronting it as its own development goes ahead. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that the divisiveness that seems to be so powerful a force in India is encouraging other states in South Asia to cock a snook at it and that, at the present moment, when Mr Rajiv Gandhi's government is employed in a series of controversies, they will be encouraged to take it for granted or even defy it. The causes of the decline of Indian regional predominance are numerous and complex, and they go back quite a bit in time.

To some extent, as in the case of the U.S.-Pakistani relationship, external factors like the Afghanistan situation have had consequences that have affected Indian primacy. In other cases, the indecisiveness and vacillation of Indian leadership have encouraged its neighbours to feel that they can get away with what earlier would have been inconceivable. Yet again, India's big-brother attitude to its smaller neighbours has alienated them to the point that even Bangladesh, in whose creation India played a crucial role, feels it necessary to sustain an anti-India platform.

Political Storm

Whatever the causes, it cannot be disputed that, however strong Indian claims to regional primacy may have been at one time, especially in the wake of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war which led to the birth of Bangladesh, those claims are today far weaker. Some of its neighbours have grown stronger economically, even as their diplomacy has become more sophisticated. Their pursuit of independence and regional non-alignment is also understandable. The challenge for India is simultaneously to protect and even advance its interests without treading on its neighbours' corns. So far, it has not been able to meet this challenge wholly successfully, and to the extent it has failed, its leverage has diminished.

In the midst of the political storm raging in the country, it looks less eligible than ever to be a regional leader. Had it at least pulled off a diplomatic triumph in Sri Lanka, its claims would have been enhanced. But it has allowed the situation there to drift into a bloody mess and is unable to make any impact on it.

them to vote for electing a candidate of a particular party to the Rajya Sabha. The Gujarat committee of privileges decided that no breach of privilege was committed. The right to vote for elections to the Rajya Sabha does not belong to the *House whole*, but to its individual elected members. By exercising this "the member does not render service" to the House. Since all privileges are only a means to the effective discharge of the functions of the House, a libellous imputation, if it is to be regarded as breach of privilege, should at least remotely relate to some proceedings of the House or to the service which a member has to render to the House.

This approach of the Gujarat committee shows maturity and vision. However, the possibility of contempt proceedings being instituted against the press by the legislature always exists. Legislatures in many countries have realised that their approach in the matter should be cautious. In the United Kingdom, the whole question of parliamentary privileges was examined in 1967 by a special committee, which stressed the need for caution. By and large, the British House of Commons has been able to maintain this approach.

In India also, the need for caution has been stressed frequently. Past precedents show that libels upon the legislatures or its members are not

tion, there will be diverse diverse matters by various legislatures, if codification is attempted. The second objection is that new forms of contempt may arise and codification may defeat elasticity. Both the objections can be answered satisfactorily. No doubt, each state legislature in India can adopt its own code of privileges. But this does not necessarily mean that the codes themselves will be different in point of substance. The Constitution leaves several matters to the law-making power of the states. But, on many such matters, the state acts tend to be uniform. Even a model law can be prepared with expert help on the subject.

As regards the need for elasticity, any legislature which has passed a law can amend its law, if the necessity arises. The point is too elementary to need elaboration.

Disabled yet honoured

PUNE, April 21 (UNI): P.G. Mhatre, a handicapped boy, has been selected by the Ministry of Welfare for the national award for 1987.

He is the president of the Jagruti apang sanghatana, a local organisation here. A sanghatana statement said that he had conducted a number of meetings, camps and conferences.

Legislatures And Indian Libel Laws

By P.M. BAKSHI

THE recent controversy relating to the punishment imposed (and subsequently revoked) on the editor of a leading Tamil periodical has once again brought into prominence an important constitutional question. What constitutes a libel upon the legislature and what powers should be allowed to the legislature for punishing such libels? The frequent recurrence of such controversies should cause concern to all those who are interested in proper functioning of certain constitutional concepts.

The constitutional concept with which one is concerned here is that of privileges of legislatures. According to the traditional doctrine, the privileges are needed to enable legislatures to function effectively without fear, favour or hindrance. They are, therefore, in aid of the constitutional functions of the legislature. Our Constitution provides that these privileges shall be such as may from time to time be defined by Parliament or state legislatures by law, and, until so defined, shall be those of that House and of its members and committees immediately before the 44th Amendment of the Constitution. As neither Parliament nor any state legislature in India has so far chosen to enumerate its privileges exhaustively, the scope of many privileges still remains undefined.

Uncertainty is not rare in law. But generally, such uncertainty on any topic gets resolved when a concrete issue arises before the courts. The courts then lay down a principle, and once it is laid down, they almost invariably follow the precedent. Controversies relating to parliamentary privileges, however, do not go to courts. A house of legislature can itself punish any person for contempt of the House. Historically, this power was claimed long ago by the British House of Commons and has been claimed on frequent occasions by the Parliament of India and state legislatures.

Breach of privilege is a vast topic. One can only cite a few illustrations. Thus, it is a breach of privilege to make comments casting reflections on the character of the proceedings of a House. This doctrine owes its origin to a resolution of the British House of Commons passed in 1701. Similarly, comments casting reflections on the character or conduct of an individual member or of the members collectively, and thereby lowering their prestige in the eyes of the public, also amounts to breach of privilege. The House of Commons in England resolved on February 26, 1701, that to print or publish any libels reflecting upon any member of the House relating to his "service" (discharge of functions) therein, was a breach of privilege of the House.

Breach Of Privilege

In India, the above resolution was adopted in 1962 by the privileges committee of the Gujarat state legislature, when it had to consider a question whether an article published in a Gujarati daily of Ahmedabad amounted to breach of privilege. The article had alleged that large amounts of money had been paid as illegal gratification to a group of members of a House, to get

always stringently punished, except where the person who published the libel has been guilty of deliberate and malicious misconduct. The U.K. select committee on parliamentary privilege (1967) also emphasised that defamatory statements should be punished only where a point is reached at which conduct ceases to be merely impudent criticism or abuse and becomes (or is liable to become) an improper obstruction of the functions of Parliament. It is only for those rare occasions that the power of the House to punish for its contempt may be preserved.

In England, this aspect became important again in 1975. In the House of Commons, Mr Eric Ogden, a member, raised the question of privilege against the *Liverpool Free Press* for publishing an article which he described as "inaccurate in content and malicious in motive." On this complaint, the committee of privileges (Second Report, December 2, 1975) observed that in such cases—as in all privilege matters—Parliament should use its power to protect itself, its members and its officers, only to the extent "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers." As regards libels on members, in England, in the ordinary cases where a member has a remedy in court, he is expected not to invoke the penal jurisdiction of the House.

Past Precedents

Whenever a controversial decision on privilege is pronounced, the question of codification of parliamentary privileges also comes before the public. At present, neither the Parliament nor any state legislature in India is in a mood to codify its privileges. Nevertheless, the matter is worth exploring. An eminent judge, Mr Justice Subba Rao, adjudicating on a privilege controversy involving the *Searchlight* (AIR 1959 S.C. 395, 415, 417) pleaded for codification, instead of keeping the law in a nebulous state. The First Press Commission stressed the desirability of defining by legislation, "the precise powers, privileges and immunities" which legislatures possess, in regard to contempt and the procedure for enforcement. (Report 1954 Vol. I Page 41.) In 1967, when the press in India demanded codification, at least the laying down of broad guidelines and conventions, the minister of parliamentary affairs, considered the demand as reasonable. (Rajya Sabha Debates December 4, 1967.)

The Press Council (2nd Annual Report 1970) made a strong plea for codification at least to the extent to which the privileges affect the press. The Second Press Commission (Report Vol. I, Page 53) commented as under:

"We think that from the point of view of freedom of the press, it is essential that the privileges of Parliament and state legislatures should be codified as early as possible."

Some objections have been raised to proposals for codification of parliamentary privileges. Some persons have, for example, stated that as each state legislature is competent to enumerate its own privileges under Article 194 of the Constitution,

Restore Sanskrit In New Education Policy

By VINEET CHAITANYA

IN the new national policy of education, Sanskrit has been removed as an option under the three-language formula. The students will no longer be able to study Sanskrit as their second or third language in schools. Instead the options will be limited to "modern" Indian languages—Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Kannad, Marathi, Gujarati, Panjabi, Bengali, Sindhi, Udia, Assamese, Malayalam and Kashmiri.

It is difficult to understand the reasons behind such a step. After all the issue is one of providing an option, not of forcing any student to learn a particular language. This step, on the other hand will deprive thousands of students who wish to study Sanskrit.

Some of the arguments advanced in defence of the step are totally fallacious. It has been said that it will reduce academic load on the already overworked student. This is false because the number of courses are not being reduced. One language is simply being substituted by the other, or rather one language is no longer going to be available as an option.

Fallacious Pleas

Another argument is that the new policy will encourage Hindi-speaking students to learn South Indian languages, thus promoting national integration. This, unfortunately, is not likely to happen. Students will chose a language closest to their mother tongue because that is the easier way out. A Hindi-speaking student is likely to choose Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati or Marathi rather than other languages. If the intention is removing Sanskrit, this policy should be changed to read that Hindi speaking students must learn a South Indian language. Removal of Sanskrit as an option is not going to help.

It has also been said that learning a modern language is more important than learning a classical

language because of practical use, national integration, etc. But Sanskrit has influenced each and every Indian language in important ways. Consequently, a person who knows Sanskrit can learn a "modern" Indian language more easily. Moreover, since there is no regional bias associated with Sanskrit, it can serve the cause of national integration more effectively.

Indirect Reason

Besides the above there is an indirect reason for keeping Sanskrit in our schools. Sanskrit has a rich literature and tradition for scholarly work. The work of *vaiyakaranas* (grammarians), *naiyayikas* (logicians), and *mimamskas* (pragmaticism) still stand the test of time. In fact, they have found new relevance as scholars in computer science, artificial intelligence, mathematics and logic try to develop methods for representation of knowledge and inference using techniques from these works.

On the other hand, the number of Sanskrit scholars is on the decline. The present policy will remove the need for Sanskrit teachers in schools, and would adversely affect Sanskrit departments and institutions of higher learning. The small trickle of students learning Sanskrit in these institutions at present will dry up because a large number of hitherto available job avenues in schools will be closed. It will be naive to think that extra funds to these institutions can ward off the calamity that will befall Sanskrit scholarship. After all, if all science education were to be eliminated from schools, what will be the fate of our technical institutions of higher learning even if they are given more funds?

Sanskrit should be available in our school curriculum as an independent subject. It will not only promote national integration but also make our priceless heritage and scholarship accessible to future generations.



TONARY HERO : Agnideeksha began with an analysis of the two kinds of images that one sees of Bhagat Singh — the popularised in calendars of a clean-shaven youth wearing a hat and the second, and more recent one, of a Sikh youngster.

Royal Salute

Documentaries on Bhagat Singh were exceptions. The first was Jawaharlal Nehru's Doordarshan's Agnideeksha shown on Sunday night and the second, Prof. Bipan Chandra's Martyrs Remembered shown the

documentary about Pakistan and India acquiring nuclear bomb-making capabilities. But then perhaps Doordarshan thought that the gravity of the situation was such that it called for some black humour. Or was it one of those smug we-have-caught-them-at-last smiles which can only be the result of shallow nationalism?

Doordarshan's documentaries about historical personalities, especially about the leaders of the freedom movement, are normally an effective means of burying them and their ideas. Thus, for example, Mahatma Gandhi despite being "buried" at Rajghat is ritually "buried" again and again, in the tributes that Doordarshan pays to him every year. The fate of Nehru, Tilak and others is no different.

One of the reasons for this effective burial is the excessively gushing nature of Doordarshan documentaries which manages to estrange both the person and his ideas from any concrete reality. The only notion of history is of a chronology of dates which ranges from the date of birth of the person to his death. Ahimsa, panchshef, swarajya, etc., become meaningless words to be strung together in a mindless commentary read out by people whose chief qualification in life is that they have passed Doordarshan's voice-test.

But the two documentaries on Bhagat Singh this week were exceptions. The first was Doordarshan Jalandhar's Agnideeksha shown on Sunday night and the second, Prof. Bipan Chandra's Martyrs Remembered shown the day after.

What was interesting about

Agnideeksha was that it began with an analysis of the two kinds of images that one sees of Bhagat Singh — the first, popularised in calendars, is of a clean-shaven youth with a hat and the second, and more recent one, of a Sikh youngster complete with a beard and a turban.

The documentary showed that both these images were far removed from the revolutionary identity of Bhagat Singh.

The calendar image of Bhagat Singh with a hat, it was argued, was that of a romantic and clever terrorist who not only managed to fool the colonial police quite often but also managed to frighten them. The English styled hat and looks perhaps symbolised the fact that he could take on the British as an equal. That Bhagat Singh never saw himself as a terrorist and indeed made a successful attempt to distance himself from terrorism was emphasised by quoting from a letter of his where he wrote, "I am not a terrorist and I never was except perhaps at the beginning of my revolutionary career. And I am also convinced that terrorist methods will lead us nowhere."

The second image of a bearded Sikh youngster, it was argued, was a sectarian attempt to claim a revolutionary hero who was not only an avowed atheist but always stood for separating religion from politics.

The documentary relied heavily on Bhagat Singh's own writings — his essays, pamphlets and letters. But it never became boring. Its primary achievement lay in the fact that it was a sharp political commentary on the life of a socialist revolutionary and there was no attempt to neutralise his political thought to make him acceptable to all and sundry. Doordarshan Jalandhar needs to be congratulated for this singularly brilliant attempt.

The documentary on the sub-

topic to crop up again is there a further clue to the mystery in the point that the famous Corbett's relations with India have many features in common with Kipling?

NJN

sequent day, devised and presented by Prof. Bipan Chandra of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, brought home the same points much more forcefully using written material as well as interviews with Bhagat Singh's comrades.

Prof. Chandra's commentary was superb and was delivered with tremendous feeling. And perhaps there was a reason for it — Prof. Chandra is not only an eminent historian of the national movement but he is also responsible for translating some of Bhagat Singh's seminal essays into English.

His reading out of the rules of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha about religion and politics and his recalling of the fact that Bhagat Singh, who went to the gallows for avenging the death of Lala Lajpatrai, had even attacked him politically when he turned communal, are likely to make it difficult for communal elements to claim Bhagat Singh as one of their own.

The impact of Martyrs Remembered, however, was reduced by appending to Prof. Chandra's commentary some footage of the national martyrs' memorial being planned at Hussainiwala and Rajiv Gandhi's speech there. The latter seemed particularly incongruous because Mr. Gandhi perhaps has as little in common with Bhagat Singh as least as Bhagat Singh had with his hat.

One of the nicest things about the quiz programme Contact is that often the quiz-master seems as lost as the school children he is quizzing. What saves the situation of course is the fact that he has the answers on a card so that after some hesitation he can say "And Begum Akhtar (sic) it is!" "But what is most disconcerting about him is that he keeps jabbing his finger at the viewers,

Whatever the nature of the periodic swings in style and method, China will continue to be guided by its communist party, and the party will adhere to its Leninist tenets.

by Ashok Mitra

BOTH scholars and political practitioners are learning to their cost that it is foolhardy to make absolute statements about the Middle Kingdom. The cautionary tale should extend to the post-revolution Middle Kingdom too.

It is now close to 40 years since the triumph of the revolution, the People's Republic of China however continues to evolve. The great leaps are not interrupted, they only keep changing their character and direction. The policy of the principle however remains in command; those who were hoping, as much as those who were fearing, that the control of the communist party over the social framework will slacken have both proved wrong. Irrespective of the preference of random outsiders, China promises to proceed inexorably, as a socialist state. The authorities there will, from time to time, make mistakes, and will also, now and then, be the victim of circumstances.

None the less, one can safely aver, a quarter of a century from today, China will only be confirmed in its status as the major Asian power, politically as well as economically. While national ethos will without question provide a not insignificant clue to this growing strength, but ideology will not take a backseat either.

It is therefore important that we, as the second most populous Asian nation, and as China's closest neighbour, organise ourselves well to study developments in that country. Emotion should, as far as possible, be eschewed in such scholastic endeavours. True, a quarter of a century ago, we fought a border war with China, and fared rather badly in it. That should however be of no particular relevance in determining either the compass or the focus of our Sinological investigations. Our ideological orientation may be altogether otherwise, we may hold strong views on the emerging trends in China's society, polity and economy, we may choose to avoid China's modalities like poison. None of these should stand in the way of our acquiring a corpus of knowledge concerning the diverse aspects of what is actually happening over there, and analysing their rationale and historicity. There can of course be a cleavage between appreciation and approval. Still, facts

of the Chinese communist party test the thesis, the vicissitudes of trial and error were accepted as an inevitable concomitant. Since, according to the party, the success of the revolution proved beyond doubt the correctness of the thesis, it was also made the basis of foreign policy of the government established by the revolution.

Other wars of liberation were

Wedde

have to be value-neutral, and the interpretation of facts must not be denuded of catholicity.

In certain circumstances, it should be more important to dissect an historical episode from the point of view of those who were the principal agents in its unfolding than display an anxiety to superimpose our own views of what their motivations were.

G. P. Deshpande, the Marathi playwright, loves to wear different hats. Among his other distinc-



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tions, he is also one of our leading China specialists, and has been in the forefront of efforts to develop the discipline of Sinology in the country by excluding both the jingy and the starry-eyed approaches. We have our prerogative to arrive at conclusions in accordance with judgment and set of values. But, before we do so, we must ferret out the data, and explain such data in terms of premises the framers of policy in China themselves consider as basic. Accepting this position, he, and his associate, Harjeet Kaur Gupta, have produced a remarkable tract which discusses in great detail the sequential progress of the People's Republic of China's Africa Policy.

The Deshpande-Gupta hypothesis is simple and straightforward. The People's Republic of China, before anything else, is an ideological entity; her foreign policy is both an extension and a fulfilment of its ideology. The roots of China's policy towards the African nations were, Deshpande-Gupta imply, not altogether dissimilar from those of the So-

ciety of China quietly withdrew; in a few others, it was the other way round.

Occasional shifts were also observable in the relative importance accorded to different countries. Economic assistance no doubt was an important adjunct of this policy, and Deshpande-Gupta have a very useful chapter containing a detailed description of the careful manner in which the Chinese

went about organizing programmes in Africa which gives account of the En-lai under 1963 to provide external events which needed China's friendly, or friendly, African movement was cause of the the China-India the ideological Viet Union had

A quarter of from India be confirmed us as the power, p economic therefore that we selves w development

open, and in transformed

In retrospect little from generalised approach in their non-success. It is far to seek for its effects, bad indeed working class was missing in can states; it be true even En-lai's strategy to an attempt front from the bourgeoisie African nations theory of the two supposed sprouted; they off one superior other to derive material advantages early 1970s, it of ball games Deshpande chronicled. They have witnessed by their explain in the relatively high prices

This is how publication date for, whatever the dic swing in China will come by its communist party will remain Leninist tenets of foreign policy forward, China know from time to ensure

IN his article "Distrust Of Party Politics" (May 13), Mr Girilal Jain has certainly raised "some questions of deepest concern to all of us".

It is difficult to assess the reaction of the community of Indian intelligentsia which he seeks to provoke. For it is unlikely to be uniform. The community has schizophrenic traits. Influenced by various cross-currents of ideas, it aspires for a wide variety of ideals, some of which are contradictory.

Most of us are intellectual offsprings of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan. Mr Jain could have added the name of M.N. Roy as well. All of them were westernised in a sense and were the co-architects of the intellectual-moral construct that shaped the Indian intelligentsia. The construct itself had heavily drawn on the ideas of liberalism and Marxism.

It is no accident that the most alienated and most westernised of all Indians became the builder of the modern Indian state and its abiding institutions. No doubt some of the politico-economic theories and institutions needed to be modified to suit Indian conditions. But Indian soil was not intrinsically hostile to their essence. Western influence as such cannot, therefore, be held responsible for the indifference of the Indian intelligentsia to the Indian state.

Mr Jain's charge against the Indian intelligentsia is that "it can not have much use for those who place the Indian state above all else." Above what? Even above nation?

If the strength of the nation is the real strength of its state, the importance of Gandhi's role in strengthening both of them should be obvious. It was his martyrdom that stemmed the tide of fanaticism after partition. Again, it was his moral appeal that almost persuaded the Muslims of Kashmir to opt for India which, had a decisive influence on the character of the Indian state in its formative stage.

Neither Gandhi nor Nehru were oblivious of what Mr Jain calls the compulsions of running the state. Gandhi blessed the dispatch of an army for the defence of Kashmir. And I have personally received "monks" from Nehru - the priority of the national fit rest over democracy, of course, in the context of Kashmir.

Material Night

But Mr Jain misses the potentiality of morality as an instrument of national policy to promote its interests. Even the superpowers rely as much on their material might as on their respective ideologies for extending their influence over the world.

India did rise as a competitive source of influence on the basis of a moral ideology. India reached the zenith of its prestige when its leader Nehru ran the Commonwealth Conference in 1954. The statesmen of the world based the basis of his intellectual and moral strength.

Likewise, Jayaprakash Narayan made use of moral force to enhance the prestige of the Indian nation. He made an outstanding contribution in mobilising international opinion in favour of the Indian stand on issues like Tibet and Bangladesh. He made a similar contribution to reintegration of the Kashmiri Muslims into the Union after their alienation in 1953 and similarly of Nagaland.

If India's world prestige has declined, if Indian nationalism has lost its cohesive strength and if the Indian state does not enjoy the confidence of the nation, is it not due to the abandonment of the moral-

intellectual construct by its leaders in favour of what Mr Jain calls "an open indifference to public morality"?

When did amoralisation and de-ideologisation of Indian politics start? Some hold that Mrs Indira Gandhi heralded the new era and trace her motivation to her sense of insecurity. Others date it back to 1962 when Chinese guns shattered the "world of illusions" in which Nehru had lived.

But perhaps by that time the moral-intellectual constructs of the earlier era had also run out of its steam. It had neither been replenished nor refined to take into account emerging social, economic and political complexities of the country. In that sense Mr Jain is right in observing that ideology and the reality have divorced each other.

Further, the Indian intelligentsia had never overcome its sense of guilt over borrowing western ideas and institutions on which the Indian state was built. It hurt its national pride. Ironically, in search for an indigenous brand of democracy and alternative institutions, the intelligentsia again drew upon another tradition of western thought of utopian thinkers, from Owen, Proudhon to Schopenhauer.

Western Ideas

M.N. Roy led the revolt of Indian intelligentsia against politics i.e. of parties and power. Though a rationalist and materialist, he was disillusioned with western institutions after his first hand experience of their working during the inter-war period. His experiences in his own country also convinced him of the futility of a political role of the intelligentsia without a cultural revolution. He prepared a blueprint of a new polities sans parties and nation.

Jayaprakash Narayan broadly adopted it as his platform to launch his formidable assault on the Constitution, Parliament and the party system, in fact, as he himself said, on the whole system "lock, stock and barrel". He was also inspired by an anarchist streak in Gandhian thought. In this role he did undermine the structure and institutions of the Indian state.

However, two points need be noticed in this context. First, it was not entirely a moral crusade. It was also an intellectual exercise at building an alternative structure. Second, nobody shared his distrust of the existing institutions better than Indira Gandhi.

Mr Jain refers to the manner in which her politics enhanced the status of JP. But the political beliefs of the two leaders converged in a positive sense also.

Both collaborated in demolishing ideological alignments. Both sought legitimacy from the crowds. From the majority of his audience in the Ramila grounds, JP declared on June 25, 1975, that the people were more important than Parliament. Indira Gandhi collected a bigger audience at the Boat Club two days later to declare that people were more important than the Supreme Court.

The moral motivation of JP and the amoral motivation of Indira Gandhi are less relevant than their thought constructs and the operational parts of their policies which undermined the structure of the Indian state.

Rajiv Gandhi is a natural heir to the Indira-JP thought frame. Like them he is distrustful of ideologies, and impatient of institutions. He has also displayed clear anti-party and anti-politics tendencies.

of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands they make on it. They just do not know how to ensure that is going on today has already done enough damage to our national perspective.

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BOTH Union's. The policy of the ticinciple, after all, has a common learning rentage. While formulating its Thesis on is fool'e Eastern Question in the early late decades of this century, the Com Middleauist International was greatly tionary influenced by Lenin's views on the post-colonial problem. Much stress was laid on the slogan of an anti-imperialist united front, with this proviso that "the workers' movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must

going on, for instance, nearer home, in Vietnam; although the communist parties had for the present gone down under in Malaya and the Philippines, Comrade Aduit was attempting to try out the Comintern thesis on the colonial question in his own manner in Indonesia; the Bandung Conference too had opened a new vista of possibilities. By the late 1950s, China's leaders considered the prospects excellent for adding a new expanse to its revolution-



Julius Nyerere of Tanzania with Zhou En-lai of China in 1965.

United Front Against Imperialism: China's Foreign Policy In Africa : By G. P. Deshpandé and H. K. Gupta (Somaiya Publications, 1986, Rs. 140)

first of all win for itself the position of an independent revolutionary factor in the anti-imperialist united front as a whole. "Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognised and its political independence secured, are temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary."

The thesis was applied in China during the course of the popular democratic revolution; the on-again off-again alliances with the Kuomintang reflected the strivings of the Chinese communist party to test the thesis, the vicissitudes of trial and error were accepted as an inevitable concomitant. Since, according to the party, the success of the revolution proved beyond doubt the correctness of the thesis, it was also made the basis of foreign policy of the government established by the revolution.

Other wars of liberation were

ary foreign policy by purposely cultivating, on a selective basis, the friendship of a number of African nations. Notwithstanding the ideological proximity initially with the line pursued by Soviet Union, since chasms were already developing between the communist parties in the two countries, the shadow fell, and an element of competitiveness crept in. In some African countries the Soviet Union succeeded in establishing itself as the major friend, and the Chinese quietly withdrew; in a few others, it was the other way round.

Occasional shifts were also observable in the relative importance accorded to different countries. Economic assistance no doubt was an important adjunct of this policy, and Deshpande-Gupta have a very useful chapter containing a detailed description of the careful manner in which the Chinese

went about organizing programmes in Africa which gives an account of the En-lai's under 1963 to provide external events which needed China's friendly, or friendly, African movement was cause of the the China-India the ideological Viet Union had

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I—Spirit Of Capitulationism

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

THE disposition of forces by China and India on the border have attracted a lot of attention in our country in recent weeks. Most of the comments on the subject have spoken of the Chinese stand on the border issue and the threat of a possible conflict if India does not withdraw its forces from some of the forward positions. They have not, by and large, explained the developments on our side of the border and the underlying considerations.

Some of our commentators appear to imply that the Indian military deployments in the last few months are unnecessarily provocative and some of them even appear to hint that these deployments have been influenced more by military than political perspectives. There have been comparisons with "Operation Brasstacks" which is still considered by some of us as having been unnecessarily provocative to Pakistan though by now the whole world knows that it took place some 150-200 km inside the Indian border and that its size was only marginally larger than "operation Digvijay" held three years ago.

The stand of many of us is similar to the one which is maintained in some quarters that having lived with a nuclear China for 20 years, there is no reason for us to make a fuss about a nuclear Pakistan. Indeed, it has been explicitly argued that since we could manage without our troops being deployed well forward on the border with China in the last 20 years, we should continue with policy now.

Amazing Proposition

This is an amazing proposition. It amounts to saying that having lived with feudalism, underdevelopment, religious tensions, smallpox and infant mortality for centuries, we can jolly well continue to do so forever. The Chinese have a word for this approach—capitulationism. This line is not different from the one prevalent in this country both in the government and outside in respect of many areas of national activity. It is a line of drift, passivity, indolence and rationalisation of weaknesses. This philosophy is admirably described in Lennox's poem "Lotus Eaters".

What is overlooked in all these comments is that the Chinese made a major shift in their stand in late 1985. They and their apologists used to talk of the strategic importance to them of the Aksaichin roads and the folly of India's forward policy in the western sector in early '60s. The Chinese then appeared reconciled to Arunachal Pradesh being part of India. Premier Chou En-Lai accepted the McMahon line boundary in respect of Burma and was prepared to accept it in respect of India in a package proposal which would leave in China possession the territory they claimed in the 1956 claim, i.e., much less than what they captured in the 1962 war. Though Chinese forces came down the Kameng division in 1962 by vacating the entire area, the Chinese validated and legitimised India's possession of Arunachal Pradesh.

Suddenly in 1985 the Chinese declared that the main dispute on the border was in the eastern sector (in Arunachal Pradesh) and said that if India wanted to have changes in the alignment of the line of control in the western sector, they would expect compensatory concessions in the eastern sector and hinted that in

their view Tawang was the adjustment they had in mind.

All through the seven rounds of official discussions Indian officials have had with the Chinese, the latter have refused to accept that the basic principle for demarcation of the border in uninhabited areas should be natural geographical features, though China presses this principle in its dispute with the Soviet Union on the Ussuri and Amur river border delineations. The natural geographical features concept (the McMahon line) has been accepted by China in respect of its border delineation with Burma. It is in this context that the Chinese moved into Sumdarong Chu valley.

McMahon Line

It has been pointed out by the Chinese and their apologists that Sumdarong Chu lies in an area which is disputed in terms of the interpretation of the McMahon line. The Indian side made an attempt during the seventh round of negotiations to obtain from the Chinese their view of the line of control in the eastern sector. It is rational that if intended intrusions and patrols straying across the border are to be avoided, or even if disengagement by 20 kilometres on both sides is to be implemented, there must be a mutual understanding of the actual line of control. The Chinese evaded furnishing their version of the line of control and still do.

In the circumstances an objective assessment of Chinese strategy on the border would lead to the following conclusions. Having secured all the territory in the west, the Chinese presumably have decided to concentrate on the eastern border. Just as they continued in the past to move forward all the time on the western border while putting forward different claim lines and calling for preservation of the *status quo*, they have now started to make claims on the eastern border (Tawang for instance). Just as they tarnished the feeble Indian attempt to hold a line of checkposts to stop further Chinese advance as forward policy in the fifties (and a number of Indians fell into that trap) now they charge us of provocations just because the Indian forces take precautionary measures lest they try out in Arunachal Pradesh the tactics they successfully implemented in the western sector in 1960-62.

In the Aksaichin area, the Chinese fully exploited the terrain and the logistical advantages. Now they are attempting to do the same in Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese suggestion that both sides should disengage from the border up to a certain distance appears reasonable to laymen. The fact is that the Chinese are on a flat plateau terrain with a good network of roads leading right up to our border on a number of points. On our side our "lotus eating" attitude has resulted in our road-stopping show of our borders by tens of miles, though a quarter of century has passed since the 1962 war. If both sides were to disengage, the Chinese can quickly get back to the border any time they want, while in our case it will not be that easy.

An equitable solution, therefore, is not just disengagement of forces but an agreement that neither side would deploy troops and logistic capability for equal distances on its side of the border. That is the appropriate way of defusing tension. Further, if there is to be no misun-

derstanding, the Chinese should intimate to India their concept of the line of control.

The 1962 war showed that once the forward ridges are overrun, Tawang is virtually defenceless. The next feasible line of defence is at Sela. Therefore when the Chinese ask that the Indian forces pull back, they are assuring us to leave Tawang unprotected. Now that the Chinese have laid a claim to Tawang and have raised their force level in Tibet to 14 divisions, it will be irresponsible for the Indian leadership to leave Tawang unprotected.

India has laid no claim to territories north of McMahon line, while China has done so in respect of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides, China invaded the territory below the McMahon line in 1962. The Chinese forces are deployed on a plateau in Tibet with an extensive network of roads leading to various ingress points in India; the Indian forces are deployed on slopes without similar logistic advantages. While the Chinese threaten all the time, the Indians never do so. Thus, de-escalation must involve a definition by China of its concept of the line of control, an assurance by it that during border negotiations it will not pose a threat to Tawang and that pending finalisation of the border settlement it will not take unilateral action to cross the line of control as it defines it. India should offer reciprocal assurances to China.

Political Authority

Unfortunately, the government of India has not explained its position to the people of this country, though certain interested quarters have tended to mislead our people into believing that the precautionary steps have been taken by the army on its own initiative. During peacetime India's chief of the army staff cannot move troops without the permission of the political authority. There has been a wholly unjustified attempt on the part of interested people to create a rift between the political authority and the armed forces. The Pakistanis tried this trick at the time of "Operation Brass-tacks" and they failed. It is now being tried out once again.

There also appears to be a general impression among some of our political circles, sections of our civilian bureaucracy, our intelligentsia and our media that the Chinese are ten feet tall and India has no choice but to capitulate to them. It would appear that most of the people, who advocate anticipatory compliance with Chinese wishes, are terrified of China as a nuclear and conventional weapons power. They cannot take courage from Vietnam's example. They usually talk as if our taking a firm stand amounts to being rigid and inflexible. The truth is that the Chinese are rigid and inflexible. Generally those who want the country to adopt a policy of anticipatory compliance in respect of China advocate a similar policy towards Pakistan and oppose the proposal that India should go in for nuclear weapons.

As a people we do not possess a sense of national pride. That made our princes accept the British rule so that an army consisting largely of Indian soldiers conquered this country for the British. The freedom struggle and 40 years of independence have not eliminated that weakness.

(To Be Concluded)

India's Partition

Sir - The report (July 7) regarding Mr Wali Khan's forthcoming book on the partition of India provides new and interesting information about what was going on behind the scenes while the Muslim League-Communist Party of India combine swore in the name of the Muslim masses. It is, however, time that the partition of India received adequate reflection rather than a repetition of worn-out cliches. Blaming the British for everything that went wrong may be fashionable. But it hardly explains salient facts such as why Dr Ambedkar made a settlement with Mahatma Gandhi while the Muslim League remained recalcitrant to the bitter end.

The British had practised their policy of divide and rule not only between the Hindus and the Muslims; they had also tried to set different sections of Hindu society against each other. They had tried to embitter the 'Dravidian South' against the 'Aryan invasion'. They had encouraged the so-called scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to break away from the so-called caste Hindus. The princes had been isolated from their own people, and 'native India' from 'British India'. The 'martial races' had been demarcated from 'non-martial' communities, and the 'agriculturalist masses' from 'non-agriculturist classes'. The non-Brahmins had been instigated against the Brahmins.

Some Sikh scholars had been egged on to proclaim that the Sikhs were a separate nation. Widespread whispers had been inspired against 'Bengali imperialism' in Assam, Bihar and Orissa, and against 'Tamil imperialism' in Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu speaking areas. But when the chips were down and the British got ready to go, all sections of Hindu society closed their ranks and stood together. The British policy of divide and rule had failed everywhere except among the Muslims.

I want to add that lament over British policies of divide and rule is neither here nor there. The British had not come to India because they had fallen for her fauna and flora, or her folk dances, or her mysticism and metaphysics. On the contrary, they had come here for the very prosaic purpose of conquering, consolidating and consolidating an empire which had proved progressively more profitable to them and which catapulted them from the status of a second-rate European nation to that of the most formidable world-power. They would not have been worth their salt if they had not played the patent game of all imperialists, in all ages. Blaming the British on that count is tantamount to conceding, in the first instance, the British claim that they had a civilising mission in India and then complaining that they had not lived up to that claim. To say the last, the entire exercise is puerile.

HARISH CHANDRA

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Sir Sayed Ahmed

Sir - This refers to letters of Mr Sita Ram Goel and Ms. Vijaylakshmi Jain (July 7). It is an acknowledged fact that Sir Sayed served the cause of education in the sub-continent in a manner in which no other leader or reformer ever did. His relentless efforts brought about an educational renaissance in the country and a number of others took their cue from him to further the cause. He was a staunch believer of Hindu-Muslim unity and never gave in to the orthodox *mullahs* who left no stone unturned in opposing him for his belief in modern education and science.

He remained undaunted even in the face of stiff resistance from his co-religionists and went ahead to lay down the foundation stone of M.A.O. College, Aligarh, despite all odds. To illustrate that Sir Sayed had a larger vision, I quote from the speech he gave while laying the foundation stone of M.A.O. College: 'This college may expand into a university whose sons and daughters shall go throughout the length and breadth of the land to preach the message of free inquiry, large hearted tolerance and pure morality.'

Sir Sayed wanted the Muslims to take to modern education but the doors of the institution he founded and nourished were never closed to Hindus, other Indians and even foreigners. It is also an historical fact that the first graduate from the Aligarh Muslim University was a Hindu.

In view of the then feudal system under the British, one can easily make out that Sir Sayed could not implement any reform without the support of the ~~rich~~ the zamindars and the nawabs. To put the blame of double standards on a reformer, be it Sir Sayed Ahmed or Swami Vivekananda, shows the bankruptcy of the moral standards of the people of our times. The assertion that Sir Sayed was a militant leader of the Muslims is a total distortion of facts. The Arabic words used by Mr Goel need an elaborate discussion separately and cannot be understood in isolation. One has to look at these terms with a just and unbiased attitude so as to be able to appreciate the central ideas they express in a phrase.

Once it is recognised and admitted that Urdu was not only born in India but was nourished and nurtured by both the Muslims and the Hindus alike, then it becomes evident that it is futile and preposterous to suggest that this language has nothing Indian in it. As Urdu came into being as a result of the interaction between two cultures, it contains a mixture of words from Indian and foreign languages. To adopt words from other languages speaks of the versatility of the language and in this respect Urdu has been second to none. Is it not an established fact that origin of numerous Urdu words can be traced to Hindi and Sanskrit? Does Mr. Jain not know that Urdu is not spoken in any other part of the world except in the Indian subcontinent? Urdu literature and poetry are replete with glory and beauty of India and attract instantaneous applause and to deny this is like denying our own existence. Is it any surprise then that Pt. Anand Narain Mulia, Krishan Chander, Raghupati Sahay, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Prof Gopi Chand Narang, Pt. Gulzar Zutshi Dehlvi, Prof. Jagan Nath Azad and Dr Malik Ram, amongst innumerable others, have chosen to write in Urdu?

It is becoming clear that the people who float divisive ideas act as a spring-board to serve the interest of some other country and attempt to distance the majority community from the largest minority of the country.

FAISAL HUSSAIN

Mehakata Collection

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In the circumstances an objective assessment of Chinese strategy on the border would lead to the following conclusions. Having secured all the territory in the west, the Chinese presumably have decided to concentrate on the eastern border. Just as they continued in the past to move forward all the time on the western border while putting forward different claim lines and calling for preservation of the *status quo*, they have now started to make claims on the eastern border (Tawang for instance). Just as they tarnished the feeble Indian attempt to hold a line of checkposts to stop further Chinese advance as forward policy in the fifties (and a number of Indians fell into that trap) now they charge us of provocations just because the Indian forces take precautionary measures lest they try out in Arunachal Pradesh the tactics they successfully implemented in the western sector in 1960-62.

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(To Be Concluded)

China Not Yet Ready For A Fair Deal—II

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

THREE is hardly any serious-minded person in this country who would dispute the proposition that India should settle the border dispute with China through peaceful negotiations. It is also quite obvious that such a settlement can be achieved only on the basis of political accommodation which would necessitate India having to make adjustments and concessions in regard to what it considered as its territory when Parliament adopted its resolution of November 14, 1962.

The McMahon line is neither sacrosanct nor does it become sinful because of its British connection. If the British were imperialists, the Chinese claim over Tibet too is based on an imperialist conquest. And today the Chinese are not prepared to allow Tibet a degree of autonomy which Arunachal Pradesh enjoys as a state of the Indian Union. Perhaps this is one reason why the Chinese resent the conferment of full statehood on Arunachal Pradesh.

Let us, therefore, look afresh at the border issue, taking into account the strategic and other interests of both sides and the realities on the ground. Let us also set aside all the arguments about the McMahon line being drawn on a small map with a thick nib, about the coordinates furnished by India in the earlier period not correctly representing the McMahon line at all points and even the principle of the mountain crest which is the underlying basis of the McMahon line. The Chinese too gave one version of their claim line in 1956, another in 1959 and finally occupied even additional areas in 1962.

The Chinese have a strategic interest in the Aksaichin roads connecting the provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang. India has a strategic interest in ensuring that the Himalayan crest remains its boundary. China has accepted this principle in respect of its border delineation with Burma and premier Zhou En-lai was prepared to concede this principle in 1961 as part of an overall package which would have given China its 1959 claim line in the western sector. Earlier in the late 50s, Prime Minister Nehru himself was of the view that Aksaichin, where not a blade of grass grew, was not worth shedding blood. Therefore one can visualise premier Zhou En-lai's package offer as the basis of a border settlement.

Claim Line

This takes into account the realities on the ground as well. In the Aksaichin area India has not exercised jurisdiction at least for three decades and in Arunachal Pradesh the Chinese have not exercised jurisdiction at any time since Tibet enjoyed a degree of sovereignty.

But premier Zhou En-lai's package was not the same as the one offered by Mr Deng Xiao-peng made recently. The crucial difference is that the Chinese occupation and retention of territory during the 1962 war over and above the claim line put forward by premier Zhou En-lai. Let us keep an open mind even on this aspect of the problem.

Since the India-China border has to be delimited in areas which

line or watershed.

Both countries should aim at an agreement which should seal the friendship between them. This means that the demarcation should not be associated by any military conquest and imposition of an unequal treaty. While the Chinese claim line of 1959 came about as a result of their forces moving into an area which India claimed but did not effectively control, the present Chinese line of control is the result of the Chinese military operation in 1962. India's possession of the Arunachal Pradesh territory was, on the other hand, not the result of a military action by this country vis-a-vis the Chinese.

This makes the settlement in the western sector more crucial than the one in the eastern sector. Though the Indian forces suffered a major reverse (mostly self-inflicted) in the Sela-Bomdila area in 1962, the Chinese vacated the entire Kameng division, while in the western sector they have forcibly occupied the area seized by them in 1962.

On what basis then can the two sides arrive at an equitable settlement on border demarcation? To begin with, let both sides agree not to use the term McMahon line with its British association and agree that the border delimitation in the eastern sector should be on the basis of natural geographical principle accepted in China-Burma border demarcation. In the western sector too, let the two countries agree on a natural geographic feature as close to the Chinese 1959 claim line as possible, thereby accommodating the Chinese strategic interests in the Aksaichin roads.

Origin Of Tension

It is often complained by the Chinese that while they have made proposals, India has been inflexible and has made no counter-offers. My proposal above can constitute a rational and flexible offer by New Delhi. It takes into account India's and China's interests and sentiments.

Meanwhile, immediate steps are called for to defuse tension. To do so it is necessary to have a correct understanding about the origin of tension. The tension has not been created as a result of the Indian army moving up to the forward areas in the last few months and taking up viable and effective defensive positions. This is the Chinese view which their propagandists have propagated. Unfortunately it has also been swallowed by sections of our elite including some part of our bureaucracy who have little understanding of the background and of the issues involved.

The tension has arisen as a result of the Chinese position that for them the most crucial dispute relates to the eastern sector and that if India wants control in the east, it has to make concessions in the west, it has to refuse to define the line of control also. They want to keep the Aksaichin area. India has indicated its perception of the line of control; it has laid no claim to any territory in Tibet; it suffers from terrain and logistical disadvantages; it was a victim of aggression in 1962. India has, therefore, good reason to be concerned and to take precautions lest 1962 is repeated.

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I—Capitulation To US-Israeli Designs

JUST as New Delhi begins a critical round of consultations on the rapidly degenerating situation in Sri Lanka, reports have filtered on of U.S. involvement in last week's coup d'état in distant Fiji. This is of course no more than a pure coincidence. But what is arresting about these reports is the story that Gen. Vernon Walters, currently the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., visited tiny Fiji shortly before the coup. Gen. Walters is no ordinary U.S. official. Just as he is no common career diplomat.

Gen. Vernon Walters has long been regarded as possibly the most dangerous man in the state department. For over two decades, his visits to different parts of the globe have brought in their wake coups, spells of bloody violence, rerudescence of ethnic strife and general political mayhem. Gen. Walters is not just a high-ranking covert action specialist. Before his appointment at the U.N. he was president Reagan's ambassador at large.

He has for years made crucial decisions about whether, how and how soon a pro-western dictatorship or a U.S. puppet régime should replace a radical, nationalist or democratically elected third world government. Since the Brazilian coup of 1965 Gen. Walters' career can be traced in Asian, African and Latin American blood. His role is directly linked to some of the numerous discreet actions that make up Washington's plan to impose a new *Pax Americana* upon the world, to reshape it after its own image—with violence if necessary.

So how is Gen. Walters relevant to Sri Lanka or to the Indian policy on that country's ethnic crisis? And why should anyone, in particular South Block officials, recall his well-publicised visit to Sri Lanka in December 1984? The short answer is that it is impossible to make any analysis of India's Sri Lanka policy without understanding U.S. interests in, perceptions of, and plans for the South Asian region as a whole. Gen. Walters' role is inseparable from these. More of this later.

Deep Crisis

To start from the Indian and first, it is only too plain that South Block's Sri Lanka policy has run into a deep crisis. New Delhi, faced with the prospect of an all-out invasion of Jaffna and a gory bloodbath, is floundering from one formula to another; it continues to vacillate between supporting the Tamils and endorsing Colombo's half-hearted proposals for a solution. It has no grip over the situation, and little leverage over any of the actors in Sri Lanka. Right now it seems desperate to want to back the moderate TULF, at the cost of the militant groups who are the sole force of resistance to Colombo's depredations in northern Sri Lanka.

New Delhi's policy has gone through many phases, orientations and shifts over the past four years. But broadly, it can be divided into two periods: from the ethnic violence of July 1983 to the end of 1984, and from early 1985 till now. If the first period was dominated by Mrs Indira Gandhi and her principal policy adviser on foreign affairs, Mr G. Parthasarathy, the second has been shaped, under Mr Rajiv Gandhi, principally by Mr Romesh Bhandari, foreign secretary between February 1985 and March 1986, and shortly thereafter

By PRAFUL BIDWAI
chairman of the AICC cell on external affairs.

On a surface view, Indian policy during the first period appears to represent a "tough" line, while the orientation during the second seems to be "soft". Our principal proposition here is that this, in particular the latter statement, is a gross distortion of the reality and that the Bhandari line in fact represents a hard-nosed, well-articulated, and aggressively promoted approach that can only weaken and compromise India's interests *vis-a-vis* those of the US in the region.

There are several components to the Bhandari line. First, it has involved leaning on the Tamil militant groups so as to push them towards a "moderate" stand, and hence into unviable compromises with Colombo. Secondly, it has meant selectively playing some of them off against the others, and at times all of them off against the moderate elements of the TULF. Thirdly, it has involved lending balancing support to the Sri Lanka government at critical junctures, while playing a supposedly neutral mediatory role. Fourthly, it has been directed at politically disarming the Tamil resistance. And finally, it has consisted in tolerating and passively watching the steady growth of western influence in Sri Lanka. This includes overt U.S. military influence and active involvement of the Israeli secret service, Mossad, as well as western mercenaries in the training of Sri Lankan troops and the supply of arms to them.

Mediatory Role

It is not difficult to list several indices of these: the Indian sponsorship of the Thimpu talks in 1985; the arm-twisting of the Tamil militants groups into attending them; the deportation (subsequently rescinded) of Mr A.S. Balasingham, of the LTTE, and Mr S.C. Chandrasenan, of the Organisation for the Protection of Tamils of Eelam from Genocide in August 1985; the selective support lent first to PLOT, then to TELO, later still to the LTTE and more recently to the EPRLF; the quiet burial of Annexure C. proposals; the attempt to coax the militant groups into dropping their insistence on some definition of a homeland; the basking lent to the vaguest of proposals for provincial autonomy; the seizure last year of the LTTE's "unauthorised" telecommunication equipment in Madras and its subsequent return to the militants, accompanied by arrests that can only be described as political. All these add up to the most effective way of weakening and politically delegitimising Tamil militancy and thus decimating the guerrillas' bargaining power *vis-a-vis* president Jayewardene's forces in a life-and-death situation.

Logically, India's Sri Lanka policy must have two components: first, protecting the Tamils' legitimate interests within the framework of Sri Lanka; and secondly, preventing the entry and expansion of superpowers, in particular U.S. influence in that country. All that has been described above is eloquent testimony to the failure of the Bhandari line on the first count. Its failure on the second is even more grave.

Consider the following. Since 1984, scores of Mossad men (one estimated says 100 or more) have trained thousands of Sri Lankan troops, including the elite special task force headed by president Jayewardene's own son. Over the

last four years, at least 140 western mercenaries have been drafted in to train, probably under Mossad's overall control, special units of the armed forces in sabotage and counter-insurgency operations. Over the last four years, the size of the Sri Lankan army has grown at least five times to 50,000; most of this expansion has taken place over the last two and a half years.

At the same time the Sri Lankan forces have become helplessly dependent upon western, Israeli and Pakistani sources for the supply of arms and ammunition. The shells with which Jaffna has been pounded over the past three months originate in Pakistan which has also been involved in training on its own soil more than 150 Sri Lankan special troops. Sri Lanka has entered into a formal agreement to fuel U.S. warships at Trincomalee. And finally, the Tamil militants allege that Pakistani pilots are now flying Sri Lankan planes in murderous sorties over Jaffna.

Eloquent Testimony

Given Sri Lanka's size, this military involvement is by no means insignificant or small. It gives the west, through the agency of Mossad, considerable influence of a direct nature, on the Sri Lankan forces. Personal contacts with the armed forces, right from the early stages and at the highest level, can prove crucial not only in altering the relationship between the military and the political structure, but also in directing the former to accomplish specific tasks. Military influence of this kind has a "sticky", semi-permanent character; it is difficult to dispel under less strained circumstances. To put it simply, Mossad or, more generally, the West as a whole, has virtually raised today's Sri Lankan army. It can safely be expected that they will not want to lose that influence, war or no war in Jaffna.

India has stood by and watched all this happen. Under the Bhandari line, this country has refused even to counter the all-too-obvious shift that has taken place over the past two years in the political rationalisation proffered by president Jayewardene for his military action. Earlier, Colombo used to castigate the Tamil militants as "secessionists", "separatists" and "armed guerillas out to disrupt the unity of Sri Lanka". Over the past two years they have been consistently characterised as "terrorists". This is neither innocent nor without consequence.

"Terrorism" is part of the current western ideological armoury, the use of which can justify any retaliatory measures, including the bombing of refugee camps, hospitals and schools, or torture, deportation and preventive detention—in other words, actions that are expressly forbidden by the Geneva conventions. "Terrorism" can be effectively used to turn ordinary people into sub-human beasts against whom any manner of attack is automatically justifiable because no human or civilised norms apply. Witness Israel's barbaric treatment of Palestinian refugees on the pretext of "terrorism".

It is entirely characteristic of the Bhandari line—itself marked by its affinity with the ideological armamentarium of the west—that it has passively accepted such characterisations and hence helped depoliticise the Tamil struggle for autonomy.

(To Be Concluded)

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The way various permutations

brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to bring it into line. The kind of thinking that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

II—Bhandari Line Fits US Plan

By PRAFUL BIDWAI

IT is tempting to argue that an important, if not the definitive, feature of India's Sri Lanka policy over the past two and a half years has been its apparently *ad hoc*, irresolute, inconsistent and incoherent character. Frequent and sudden shifts in South Block's stance *vis-a-vis* Colombo and the Sri Lanka Tamils, mutually contradictory statements showing up awkward efforts at reconciliation, the drafting in of all manner of people as negotiators (the latest addition being Mr Dinesh Singh), and the "see-saw" phenomenon so often in evidence in the handling of Tamil militant and moderate groups all tend to support this view.

The inconsistencies and the incoherence are real, just as they are visible. Underlying them, however, is a deep continuity which is reflected in the results that the Bhandari line has yielded. It is best understood as composed of four elements. The first is a long-term undercurrent or a subtle tilt in favour of Colombo *vis-a-vis* the Tamils and the acceptance of the terrain of conflict and its resolution, as defined by the former. Thus, the government of Sri Lanka has been allowed to seize the initiative and is now increasingly calling the shots.

A second element of the continuity is the depoliticisation and, to a certain degree, delegitimisation of the Tamil struggle for autonomy within Sri Lanka. The treatment of some militant groups is no more than a nuisance and the simultaneous appeasement of some others have had that precise effect. The tacit acquiescence in Colombo's characterisation of the Tamils as "terrorists" has only reinforced this.

Basic Incapacity

A third element is the basic incapacity of the Bhandari line to prevent the pursuit of or frequent resort to a military solution to the conflict. This is not to suggest that president Jayewardene's government has finally opted for a purely military solution, but to argue that the Bhandari policy cannot effectively counter a strategy which has a haemorrhaging effect on Sri Lanka, or involves any number of military expeditions against Tamil civilians.

And the final—and geopolitically the most crucial—element is the capitulation or yielding of ground to western and Israeli influence in Sri Lanka. Some aspects of this were discussed yesterday. Some others too deserve attention. New Delhi has consistently failed to make moves that could have helped prevent a dangerous slide in Colombo's foreign policy towards the West. The kind of pro-Western orientation that Sri Lanka showed during the Falklands war,—and it was the only significant country in the non-aligned movement to support the British—has only got reinforced over the past five years. Thus, when tenders were floated for the con-

“party as well as those who don’t know what it was Mossad and not Tamil extremists who was behind the snide job” is hard to refute, although no hard evidence is as yet available to prove it.

The two blasts fit perfectly into a

pattern that is now only too familiar in covert action and destabilisation programmes undertaken by the American CIA and Mossad in country after Third World country. One only has to read Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman's *the Washington Connection* and *Third World Fascism*. Philip Agee's *Inside The Company* and Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks' *The CIA And The Cult Of Intelligence* to see what these patterns are. What is of special concern to us is the likely consequence of western and Israeli manoeuvres in Sri Lanka and changes in Colombo's foreign policy orientation for the South Asian region as a whole.

Our principal proposition here is that the policy changes, political shifts and military or covert manoeuvres in Sri Lanka—to the emergence and development of which the Bhandari line has contributed so much, albeit indirectly—are such as would dovetail neatly into the American strategic plan for this region.

To put it simply, that plan is based as much on weakening and limiting India's position in South Asia as on drawing other countries, principally Pakistan and Sri Lanka, into the US fold or "strategic consensus". The prominent position accorded to Pakistan in the US Centcom (Central Command) structure extending all the way from the Persian Gulf to Thailand, as well as the latest US economic and military aid package constitute a major plan of the policy. Its other major planks are one to ensure that India's rôle in the region is confined to its borders, and to keep New Delhi under constant pressure, both regional and domestic; and two, to reshape Sri Lanka's political role and foreign policy so as to bring them into alignment with the western bloc and with US strategic interests in particular.

A pre-eminently rational and efficient way of accomplishing this—barring promotion of military links and influence—is to keep the Sri Lanka 'pot' boiling and to "neutralise" India in her mediatory rôle in the island state and her political rôle in South Asia.

The long-term strategic interest of the US in Sri Lanka is considerable. It is best exemplified by Trincomalee, an exceptionally well-endowed harbour, with a natural mountain protective cover that is the naval strategist's dream. The very location of Trincomalee, which potentially gives it command over a vast area from West Asia through South Asia and the Indian Ocean to South-East Asia, makes it more valuable than many Subic bays and Guam put together. It follows that the US would flinch from few actions that are essential to the promotion of its strategic interests in the region, even if they have a slow haemorrhaging effect on Sri Lanka and produce thousands of civilian casualties.

Policy Changes

Sultations taken in New Delhi and drafted failed to produce even the basis for a major departure. This remains overdue.

(Concluded)

Ad Hocism In Punjab

Rajiv's Confusing Signals

By GIRILAL JAIN

THE Union government would have had to impose President's rule in Punjab even if elections to the vidhan sabha were not due next month in Haryana. The forthcoming poll in the state could at best, or worst, have influenced only the timing of the decision. The decision itself could have been avoided only at grave risk to the country's integrity.

The terrorists had clearly stepped up their activities in recent months, with the result that the number of casualties, both killed and injured, had gone up. But the Centre could have lived with that problem for more time if that development had not been accompanied by the abdication of a parallel administration and an attempt to remove Mr Ribeiro as police chief.

Principal Obstacle

These two conditions for the Centre's tolerance of the Barnala government, it should hardly be necessary to point out, were not met. The extremists had set up a parallel administration in the wake of so-called social reform movement which sought to abolish liquor, meat and tobacco shops, force barbers and tailors of fashionable clothes to give up their ways. And while the movement failed to impose what its architects had as the ideal Sikh way of life on Sikhs as well as Hindus, the parallel administration levied and collected "taxes". Inevitably, unless fully checked, it would have widened the scope of its activities and created a Khalistan even if, for some time being, within the Indian nation in name. This reality on the ground in Punjab was so stark that it is extraordinary that anyone could have missed it even in the rest of India.

For Mr Ribeiro, he had long regarded as the principal obstacle in their path not only by the extremists and the terrorists but also by many of the Akalis in Mr Surjit Singh Barnala's own camp, including some of his ministers. These ministers had been determined to see that the police chief's term, due to expire on May 31, was attended. Matters came to a head when a terrorist, allegedly a member of Mr Chandumajra, a minister in Mr Barnala's government now deceased, was killed in an encounter with the police. Mr Balwant Singh, second man in the state, also took up cudgels against Ribeiro in the first week of May. Half of Mr Chandumajra and Akalis in league with the former. Mr Barnala was in no mood to discipline him or sack him. The Centre could not have agreed to Mr Ribeiro's tenure on May 31, without desiring whatever credibility is still left among the people in Punjab, especially the Hindus who were under great pressure to leave.

It is possible, indeed likely, that Mr Singh was also up to his old game of trying to replace Mr Ribeiro as chief minister. Earlier he had tried to do it with the support of Akali legislators belonging to the Tohra-Badal-Amrinder Singh group such as Mr Chander and Mr Sandhu, another minister now in detention. In

view of their disqualification from membership of the vidhan sabha, the dissident Akalis could not have been as helpful to him as in the past but their support still mattered. It is almost certain that Mr Balwant Singh was in touch with the so-called United Akali Dal chief, Mr Simranjeet Singh Mann, the former IPS officer detained on serious charges. All in all, Mr Barnala could well have himself found in a minority in his own Akali faction. The Centre could not possibly have ignored this contingency.

But it is highly doubtful whether the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, himself has been fully cognisant of the grim reality in Punjab and whether he has drawn the necessary inference from the collapse of the policy which he has pursued since the 1985 summer. Ad hocism has been writ large on his actions and statements in respect of Punjab in the recent critical weeks. Indeed, the demonstration of lack of forethought and careful calculation has been so patent that it has been almost inevitable that the people should have drawn the conclusion that in imposing President's rule in Punjab, he has been guided by nothing nobler than the Haryana elections next month.

It is depressing beyond words that on the very eve of the dismissal of the Barnala government, he should have acquiesced in, if not approved of, Sushil Muni's discussions with the acting *jathedar* of the Akal Takht, Mr Darshan Singh Ragi. This one even speaks so eloquently of utter recklessness on the part of those who advised the Prime Minister in this regard and for his own lack of understanding of the gravity of the situation in Punjab that no further evidence is required to establish both these points beyond any reasonable doubt.

Grim Reality

Mr Ragi owes his present position to self-proclaimed Khalistanis. Even if he himself is not quite a Khalistani, he is their spokesman. As such it is his duty to facilitate their task of setting up a separate Sikh state. His preconditions for talks with the Union government cannot leave the slightest doubt regarding his motives. The conditions include the withdrawal of all paramilitary forces from the state, the release of all prisoners arrested in connection with extremist-terrorist activities and the rehabilitation of all Sikh soldiers who deserted the army in the wake of "Operation Bluestar" in June 1984.

As it happens, Mr Ragi lacks the status to bring various terrorist-extremist groups together and oblige them to accept a settlement which may be reached with him. It is beyond belief that anyone in a position to influence the Prime Minister should be willing to accept Mr Ragi as an interlocutor. Surely Mr Gandhi has himself and his advisers to blame if his handling of Punjab arouses fears among the people.

Sushil Muni is an unorthodox Jain *sadhu* who has for years sought to play an activist political role. It is not unlikely that he has been encouraged by various individuals, not all of them well disposed

towards Mr Rajiv Gandhi, to cast himself in the mediator's role in Punjab. But that is beside the point. We are concerned with the fact that this well-meaning Muni, with little understanding of the complexities of the problem in the state, went to Amritsar as virtually an accredited representative of the Prime Minister, that the state government was totally bypassed, and that the CRP around the Golden Temple was withdrawn so that a most dreaded terrorist, Avtar Singh Brahman, could be assured safe passage into and out of the shrine and enabled to participate in the talks.

All this could generate only two messages to the people. First, that whatever the reason, the Centre no longer regarded the Barnala government as its main instrument for fighting extremism and terrorism in the state. Secondly, that New Delhi was willing to make a deal with the terrorists.

Coherent Policy

It is not possible for us to say whether Mr Gandhi and his aides recognised the consequences of Sushil Muni's mission. If they did, they could afford to ignore the impact of the first message if they had already decided, as they appear to have done, to remove the Barnala government. But how on earth could they wish to create the impression that they were prepared to make a deal with the extremists? We would wish to believe that once again they had acted in an *ad hoc* and careless manner. The other possible inference is too depressing to be faced.

As if Sushil Muni's visit to the Golden Temple had not done enough damage to the morale of those in the security forces, the Prime Minister followed it up with the statement last weekend that President's rule in Punjab would be a short affair and that any group in possession of a majority in the vidhan sabha would soon be allowed to form a government. This statement, too, could admit of only interpretations—that Mr Barnala's utility was over and that Mr Badal or some other nominee of the extremists to come into power.

In fairness to the Indian people, Mr Gandhi must give up the policy of appeasement which Mr Arjun Singh successfully sold to him in 1985. Punjab has been brought to the brink of a precipice as a result of the policy of drift under Mrs Indira Gandhi before "Operation Bluestar" in June 1984 and of appeasement since the Rajiv-Longowal accord in July 1985. It will go over the brink unless Mr Gandhi recognises that the margin of safety now is menacingly small and unless he acts with the necessary care and courage to widen that margin.

Mr Gandhi must grasp two facts before he can work out anything like a coherent policy for Punjab. First, that no group of Akalis can be entrusted with the administration of the state so long as the extremists and the terrorists have not been liquidated and the Akalis wholly cured of their ambivalence. Secondly, that Pakistan has acquired at a very low cost a most powerful weapon to weaken India's security arrangement which it will not easily let slip out of its grip.

of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

and combinations are brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to take the national perspective.

The engineer has every confidence in the extreme of avoiding any application of force. The land belonging to Mr S.L. Shivaswamy had been duly acquired by the state government from being acquired by the board in 1984, yet the house still stands. The engineer has gone to great lengths to avoid extension of the original building. The extent of avoidance is extreme. The engineer has gone to great lengths to avoid extension of the original building. The extent of avoidance is extreme. The engineer has gone to great lengths to avoid extension of the original building. The extent of avoidance is extreme.

struction of an oil storage depot in Trincomalee where the US fleet would be refuelled. New Delhi's response was not, as might have been expected, to protest against the move, but to make a bid (as it turned out, an unsuccessful one) for the contract.

contract.

Again, when the Israeli president Mr Chain Herzog, visited Colombo last November—and there were at least four major exchanges between Israeli and Sri Lanka officials or ministers earlier, in the latter country as well as abroad—the Indian response was so weak and low-key as not to matter.

Amazing as it might seem, New

as not to matter.

Amazing as it might seem, New Delhi chose not to take up the visit or the setting up a special Israeli interest section in the US assembly (which has since moved to a separate commercial building in Colombo) with the Arab states, although it was widely expected that it would do so. Similarly, South Block missed several other opportunities, such as those presented by the Islamic summit in January this year, to lobby the more anti-Israeli Arab states against the Colombo-Tel Aviv link and to provide a counterpoint to Gen Zia-ul-Haq's open championship of the Sri Lankan government's cause in a variety of fora.

New Delhi's passivity, if it can be

New Delhi's passivity, if it can be called that, has endured in spite of some more recent events such as the bomb blasts on the Trincomalee highway and in Colombo last month, which point to well-trained saboteurs. The charge made by the pro-Sinhala Sri Lanka Freedom Party as well as the Sri Lankan left that it was Mossad and not Tamil extremists who was behind the "snide job" is hard to refute, although no hard evidence is as yet available to prove it.

The two blasts fit perfectly into a

It is apparent that the US ~~and~~
in Mossad to do at least a part of its
job in Sri Lanka. That is probably
where Gen. Vernon Walters and the
Israeli contacts come in. The
Mossad link should cause no sur-
prise: in 1981 the US and Israeli
signed a formal memorandum of
understanding which provides that
the two would not compete with
each other in the third world but that
the one would do the other's work,
wherever necessary. Thus, Israel
has been involved in right-wing
political and military activity in dis-
tant central and south Americas, in
southern Africa and even in South
Korea and Taiwan.

Korea and Taiwan. From the foregoing the conclusion is inescapable that the Bhandari policy complements and fits in tightly with the overall US strategy for Sri Lanka and South Asia. It is irrelevant whether it was designed and crafted as such. It does not also matter what the intention and motives of its author were or are. The point is that never before has a major South Block policy, on the South Asian region had the degree of convergence with US strategic interests that marks the Bhandari line. Sri Lanka policy has not

line. India's Sri Lanka policy has not merely been a failure and an embarrassment. It has without doubt been a major disaster when seen in the context of India's interests in contraposition to US strategic plans. Regrettably, however, the Bhandari line has continued unchanged since March last year; there has been no departure from it. All the reviews and consultations that have been undertaken in New Delhi so far have failed to produce even the basis for a major departure. This remains overdue.

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July 1983

Writing on the Wall

THE moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy Tears wash out a word of it." What poet Edward Fitzgerald wrote about a century ago has an apt application to the changed political climate in India. The recent Assembly elections in the south have spelt the end of an era. Neither lamentation, breast-beating, wishful thinking or audible gnashing of teeth will bring back the cherished Congress (I) charisma, epitomised by Indira Gandhi.

The N. T. R. phenomenon in Andhra is a portent of the shape of things to come. The film star turned politician, and now catapulted to the office of Chief Minister in Andhra uttered quite a few home-truths in his first public address after assumption of office. He swaggered like a film star and what is known as "filmi dialogue" was very much in evidence, that is rhetorical eloquence. But there was no denying his boastful claim. The Telugu Desam leader said like a triumphant hero that never in the annals of democracy had a party founded less than a year ago received such overwhelming support and affection of the people. During his poll campaign, his detractors had made fun of him and his party, but unmindful of their snide observations, "he went about with the divine energy and strength bestowed on him." The attempt to dismiss Mr. N. T. Rama Rao as a freak phenomenon has cost the ruling party dear. The main lesson that the Congress (I) has learnt in this election is not to belittle its adversary, not to behave as though patriotism is its monopoly and not to rely entirely on Mrs. Gandhi's charisma to pull the chestnuts out of the fire in crucial elections.

The Congress (I) party General Secretary, Mr. G. K. Moopanar, has sought to explain away the ruling party's reverses in the south in a way that suggests he has failed to realise the implications of the rout. According to Mr. Moopanar, the near-complete rout suffered by the national-level Opposition parties in Andhra was a clear indication of the local measure of the issues which influenced the voters in that State. What the ruling party is yet to grasp is the fact that the failure of a fragmented national-level Opposition to offer a viable alternative has brought about a sea change in Indian politics. People in sheer despair have turned to "crusading non-politicians" and not regional leaders for rescuing them from the clutches of the misrule and cynical manipulations by a corrupt élite.

Competent political analysts have rightly recorded that what we are witnessing in Andhra, Karnataka and elsewhere reflects the popular frustration with a system of government that has paralysed itself. We are in for many destabilisations and political upsets. If various regions are waiting for their charismatic images, the political disarray is being heightened by revolts within the ruling party in Gujarat, Maharashtra and elsewhere. Make no mistake, these stirrings will fertilise regional aspirations and the formations that go with them. The entire spectrum of political leadership in India seems unaware of the explosive contents of such a situation. Regional interests are coming to the fore because of the remote and cynically motivated manipulations of the affairs of the various Congress (I)-ruled States by the puppets of Delhi. Today it is Telugu Desam, tomorrow it will be some other Desam. Already Assam and Punjab are straining at the leash held by a progressively weakening Centre. Rampant regionalism is the backlash of accumulated neglect, malperformance and corruption. It can be checked only by proper understanding of the issues and performance of the dedicated sort at the national level. Failure on this score will be the precursor to the balkanisation of the country and all that goes with it.

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national priorities. The situation that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

1983 Jan 11 Survival at stake

WHERE a country's security is concerned the responsibility is primarily that of the State. The people, by and large, cannot possibly have full access to the information, some of it top secret, gleaned by the country's rulers. Those who have pen and paper or a platform or some other plank, can certainly air their views. But they cannot possibly have any marked influence on policy-making for, in the nature of things, they are in no position to judge fully the danger confronting the nation and the needs and the requirements of the State to shore up its security to the maximum possible extent. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who is at the helm of affairs, has warned the nation that the sale of F-16 Fighter Aircraft to Pakistan by the United States has brought "vast areas of India within their range of attack". Expressing India's concern over the deal, Mrs. Gandhi said that military package with the U.S. also "threatens to drag Pakistan into the area of big power conflict and rivalry".

It is the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the Government to meet the danger with such preparations and equipment as they consider necessary, for they are alone in a position to assess fully the gravity of the situation and the resources needed for the purpose. It is a trite saying that security transcends all other considerations. To concentrate on development plans and projects ignoring the needs for defence, is to build on sand, for the whole national edifice can collapse at the first breath of aggression if the country concerned has only a paper-thin defence. Beg, borrow or steal, India in the interest of her survival has to match the weaponry secured by Pakistan through U.S. indulgence and Saudi gold.

It is intriguing to note that Indira Gandhi has also warned Pakistan that its 'military package deal' with the U.S. threatens to drag that country into the area of Big Power conflicts and rivalry. On the first day of 1983, the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force, underwent a transformation. It became a "Unified Command", a rise in the American military hierarchy, which puts its commander on a par with the man in charge of all American forces in, say, Europe or the Pacific. It has also been blessed with a new name — "The United States Central Command" — and a tie to the specific part of the world. The new Command's area includes Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea, the Gulf, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. Shorn of frills, it means that the U.S. is now concentrating its striking force over a wide belt, including the Gulf zone, to make sure of its oil supply and to foil any Soviet move to penetrate further into the Middle East, especially Iran. Pakistan is being built up by the United States not out of any spite to India, but for the deployment of this striking force if and when necessary.

In other words, for all practical purposes, the United States will have either bases or certain other facilities for operating through Pakistan. Pakistan under Zia has deliberately allowed itself to be deeply involved in the conflict between the two super-powers. There is nothing that India can do at the moment to undo what is a settled fact. Whether we like it or not, we have been driven into a situation where we have to shore up our defence and strengthen our diplomatic ties with certain friendly powers to meet the monumental challenge posed by a short-sighted neighbour.

Admittedly, with our accumulated resources and depleted foreign exchange reserves, it would be an uphill task to ensure that Pakistan does not have an edge over us, especially in the air. It will mean a further tightening of the belt all round, disciplined hard work in fields and factories and a truce to our divisive and corrosive political squabbles. Sans blood, toil, tears and sweat the country might lie prostrate at the feet of some military adventurer with superior mobility and fire power. We will have to pay a heavy price to avert that disaster. But are we downhearted? Let the nation rise as one man and shout a thunderous

Office Of President

The Prime Minister's claim that he and his ministers have kept the President of the republic fully informed on important developments is wholly unconvincing and so is his attempt to blame the opposition for "politicising" the office of the head of state. As far as we can recall, this is the first time since he took over as Prime Minister in his own right on December 31, 1984, that Mr Gandhi has made such a claim; in 1985 he had revelled in the charge that he was ignoring the President. Obviously there are good reasons for this change of stance which we shall refer to later. Right now we would wish to make the point that one does not need to depend on leaks either from Rashtrapati Bhawan or the Prime Minister's office to be able to catalogue the "differences" between them. One has only to go through newspaper clippings to list the numerous occasions when Mr Gandhi should, according to the well-established convention, have called on Giani Zail Singh to brief him and he did not. Mr Gandhi and his aides may not have much respect for the Fourth Estate. But they cannot deny the reported facts. They would, for example, find it difficult to cite at best more than an instance or two when the Prime Minister has called on the President after a visit abroad or briefed him after the visit of a foreign dignitary to New Delhi. Similarly, they would find it hard to explain why the Giani has not been allowed to avail of the many invitations from foreign governments or why Congress MPs have issued statements which cannot be said to have raised the status of office of the President.

Giani Zail Singh is a politician of long standing with specially keen interest in developments in Punjab. He was bound to feel unhappy if the Prime Minister did not even go through the motions of keeping him informed on the state, as Mr Gandhi did not. But he could perhaps have lived with this irritation if he had not felt humiliated on other counts. It is indisputable that he felt humiliated and he cannot in fairness be blamed for it. Imagine Congress chief ministers not inviting him to their states, or finding excuses to postpone a visit by him, or ministers not caring to heed his requests to go to Rashtrapati Bhawan or reports of inquiry commissions being withheld from him, or paragraphs being deleted from his Independence Day broadcast after it had been recorded and circulated to the press. As it was only to be expected, he has reacted. Here we enter a grey area. We cannot say for certain whether or not the Giani would have given his assent to the controversial Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill if he was not angry with the Prime Minister, or whether or not he would have taken exception to the terms of the accord with Mr Lal Dengia in respect of Mizoram. But it is a reasonable assumption that he would not have been as critical of the Prime Minister and the government as he in fact has been if he had not felt ignored.

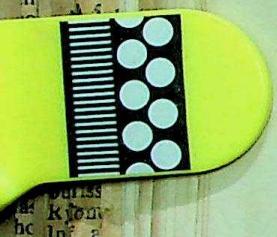
Regardless of personalities involved, the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister are bound to be uneasy for the good and simple reasons that while the latter would tend to seek to reduce him to the role of a rubber stamp, the former would resent it. The controversy between Dr Rajendra Prasad and Mr Nehru on the role of the President is too well known to need reiteration. Similarly, it is also well known that Dr Radhakrishnan was critical of the way Mr Nehru had handled India's relationship with China. During the emergency which Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed had proclaimed at Mrs Indira Gandhi's instance without raising any question, the then Prime Minister had thought it necessary to push through Parliament a constitutional amendment which specifically stated that the President shall be guided by the advice of the Prime Minister. This was clearly an expression of her unwillingness to trust even the obliging Mr Ahmed completely. The problems that arose between Mr Sanjiva Reddy as President and Mr Morarji Desai as Prime Minister have been listed. By its very nature this issue cannot be satisfactorily settled. For, if the President is reduced to a rubber stamp, he forfeits the nation's respect and his office loses its *raison d'être*. If he exercises his function of cautioning and counselling the Prime Minister like the British monarch, he is likely to run into difficulties with the Prime Minister. The relationship has, therefore, to be handled with care. On the evidence available to us, we cannot in all conscience say that Mr Gandhi has exercised the necessary care. And it looks as if the Giani has seized the initiative in the cold war between them. This is a measure of his political skill which Mr Gandhi's advisers appear to have underestimated.

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Jan 23, 1983 Isolate the Akalis

THANKS to the continuing intransigence displayed by the Akali leaders who insist on the unconditional acceptance of their rigid demands virtually at pistol-point, the Punjab tangle has defied solution despite serious and prolonged efforts by the Government. The latest round of Centre-Akali talks held in Chandigarh ended on an uncertain note. While the Union Home Minister, Mr. P. C. Sethi, claimed that the talks were inconclusive, the Akali leaders asserted that there was no need for further dialogue since "the ball is now in the Centre's court". Later, Akali Dal President Sant Harchand Singh Longowal reiterated that the Government should now announce its decision on the Akali demands since the Akalis had fully explained their viewpoint. Meanwhile the next phase of the Akali agitation starts on January 26 when party MPs, MLAs and SGPC office-bearers and executive members will assemble at Amritsar for submitting their resignation from their posts.

Lest this be construed as a symbolic gesture, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale has warned that the intensified fight after January 26 will create "dangerous consequences". He has also asked the Sikh youth to be ready for "supreme sacrifice" for achievement of their objectives. While the religious demands of the Akalis could be considered and accepted, their political demands which adversely affect neighbouring States like Haryana and Rajasthan cannot possibly be conceded. These include a review of the Ravi-Beas waters award and the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab. The Chief Ministers of both Haryana and Rajasthan refused to yield on these issues during their talks with the Prime Minister a few days back. Of course, the Centre is competent to take final decisions on these matters if the Akalis do not relent but it has rightly decided to involve the Opposition in yet another move to find a negotiated settlement. Initially, some Opposition leaders were inclined to support the Akalis from purely partisan motives but even they now seem to realise the unreasonable nature of the Akali demands. On Friday night, the Government and the Opposition leaders decided to invite the Akali leaders for a 'combing meeting' to find an amicable solution to the prolonged political tangle in Punjab. This decision was taken at a 135-minute meeting Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had with the leaders of various Opposition parties to seek their views on Punjab affairs. The meeting also made an appeal to "all concerned to create an atmosphere conducive to an amicable settlement".

Misgivings among the Opposition leaders about the anti-national character of the Akali agitation have been voiced from time to time. Only the other day, BJP chief Atal Behari Vajpayee urged the Centre to ask the Akalis to clarify the Anandpur Saheb resolution in unequivocal terms. He also called upon the Union Government to disapprove of the use of religious places for political purposes. These, the BJP leader asserted, should precede any settlement with the Akalis. He warned that the unity and integrity of the country should not be compromised to appease the Akalis. Similar sentiments had been expressed by Lok Dal leader Charan Singh earlier. Meanwhile, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal has been issuing firman after firman inciting Sikhs outside Punjab to rise in protest. Like everything else, this perverse strategy is subject to the law of diminishing returns. The Akali leaders have only succeeded in alienating public opinion in the rest of the country. The move for a combined meeting between Government representatives, Opposition leaders and the Akali leaders may or may not succeed but it will certainly serve to isolate the Akalis if they still refuse to return to reason.

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The Chinese Threat 25 Years After The Attack

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

OCTOBER 20 will be the 25th anniversary of the Chinese attack on India in 1962. In this period, the border dispute between the two countries has not been solved. Indeed, last year, the border once again came to be activated for the first time after 1967, when the last major clash took place in Sikkim.

More recently there have been reports of China reinforcing its forces in Tibet—a reinforcing of a kind and force level that had not been seen since 1962. The Chinese are also believed to have conveyed their annoyance with India through a number of channels—particularly American. Perhaps because of our domestic preoccupations and concerns in respect of Pakistan, we have tended to overlook the dangerous potentialities of the Chinese reinforcements in Tibet.

The public memory is short. It is, therefore, necessary to recall the events that preceded the Chinese attack in 1962. Though I am not suggesting that history is likely to repeat itself, there is a remarkable similarity in the pattern of events now and of the months preceding the fateful autumn of 1962. The Chinese steadily reinforced their forces in Tibet from May to September in 1962. The Chinese division in Tibet did not materialise after Jawaharlal Nehru talked of throwing them out on October 12, 1962. They were already in their concentration areas weeks before.

In the early months of 1962, the Chinese had one of their intensive propaganda campaigns about learning from a young soldier who was killed in an accident—Li Feng. They are reported to have restarted the campaign about learning from Li Feng's life once again in Tibet. In June 1962, according to the then director of intelligence bureau, Mr B.N. Mullick, the Chinese consul-general in Calcutta was reported to have told some of his Indian acquaintances that the Chinese were losing patience and would be compelled to use force in the coming months. Though there are various versions about what happened between Mr Krishna Menon and Marshal Che Yi in Geneva in 1962, one version was that Marshal Che Yi warned Mr Menon sternly. Now there are reports of Chinese warning India and Mr Deng Xiaoping talking of teaching India a lesson once again.

Remarkable Similarities

There are also some remarkable similarities in the political background situation between 1962 and 1987. 1962 saw the beginning of a power struggle in China with the army, under the leadership of Lin Piao, making a bid for increased influence in the affairs of the state. Once again China is witnessing the beginning of a leadership struggle.

In India, 1962 saw a breakdown in the health of Mr Nehru and the air was thick with speculation on who and what after Nehru. There was talk of India entering a dangerous decade. India was then preoccupied with the U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan which was continuing on their inexorable course even when President Kennedy was deemed as the warmest supporter of India's democratic cause, and an admirer of Mr Nehru.

The Chinese attack in 1962 was

intended to disrupt a growing intimate relationship between India and the Soviet Union and to expose India's vulnerability. Following Mr Gorbachov's visit, there is a new dimension to Indo-Soviet relationship marked by the Soviet offer of collaboration on a significant scale in a high technology area.

There the similarities end and we have to take note of major differences in the situations now and in 1962. Firstly, unlike in 1962, the Indian army is on the border. Though we have tended to ignore the need to ensure our preparedness vis-a-vis the Chinese forces in Tibet in the last two decades, there has been an increased awareness of infrastructural shortcomings in the last one year and steps are being undertaken to rectify them. It is these steps which are being described by the Chinese and some of our own people as being provocative.

Major Differences

Secondly, while in 1962 the Indian military leadership was inexperienced and it faced a Chinese military leadership which had some 25-years of battle experience, today, the situation is somewhat different. The Chinese weaknesses were exposed in their war with Vietnam in 1979 and their subsequent inability to implement their threat to teach the Vietnamese a lesson. The Indian army's conventional war equipment is not less advanced than that of the Chinese, as it was in 1962, which factor had an enormous psychological impact, both on our forces and the political leadership.

Thirdly, in 1962, the Indian political and military leaders did not comprehend the nuances of the use of force short of war, and consequently, got into a panic. The crisis vis-a-vis Pakistan last January proved that there is now a far better understanding of the doctrinal aspects of coercive diplomacy among our armed forces leadership and at least some sections of our political leadership. However, some sections of our political leadership, bureaucracy, and vast sections of our media did not bother to verify facts about "Operation Brasstacks" and indulged in unjustified criticism of "our brinkmanship". Now that the facts are clear none of those critics has said *mea culpa*.

This is a grave vulnerability we must overcome. We should not, once again, swallow disinformation and confuse ourselves. We must distinguish between legitimate military preparations, which will constitute factors of deterrence, and provocation. The country has not been well served by the armchair punditry of our glossy magazines with access to various foreign embassies and some of our retired servicemen, who have not kept touch with developments in the armed forces.

Fourthly, the fear of China benumbed our will to act, in 1962. General Thimayya had persuaded himself that China had the backing of the Soviet Union. We were easily dissuaded from considering the use of air force though all the advantages were on our side since the Chinese air force was not functional at all in 1962. Even today, in the use of air power in the Himalayan crest and a belt of territory on both sides, the Indian air force has an edge over any adversary.

Fifthly, there is the Indo-Soviet

treaty which proved its effectiveness in 1971. Though the Soviet Union is attempting to improve its relations with China, Moscow cannot allow Beijing to apply military pressure on India and yet stay neutral, as some people in this country envisage. While appropriately the general secretary, Mr Gorbachov and other Soviet officials refuse to commit themselves in public in answer to the simplistic demand of our pressmen to clarify their stand in regard to India's possible security problems with China and Pakistan, in private, they are prepared to acknowledge that their relationship with India is one of their highest priorities.

Sixthly, the Chinese-Pakistani relationship is today a highly visible one, compared to 1962 and one should take into account the possibility of China and Pakistan resorting jointly to coercive diplomacy vis-a-vis India. It is not unlikely that the US may choose to acquiesce in the situation, to compel the Indian leadership to accept the role envisaged for it in the U.S. scheme of things in South Asia.

Lastly, our domestic political situation is creating for us enormous vulnerabilities. It is somewhat comparable to the AIDS (acquired immunity deficiency syndrome) affecting the human body. Healthy democratic functioning gives to a nation immunity against an interventionist and coercive diplomacy. If the democratic consensus breaks down and the political system develops vulnerabilities, then this immunity breaks down and the system invites various kinds of troubles, such as the use of coercive diplomacy against us by throwing themselves open to drug trafficking, large-scale smuggling, large-scale intervention of transnationals, irregularities in arms deals and illegal financial linkages. Various third world countries have become subject to external pressures. This happened to Chiang Kai Sheik's China, Diem's Vietnam, the Shah's Iran, the Pakistan of general Ayub Khan and Mr Bhutto, and the Bangladesh of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman.

Political Situation

India is not yet in the same position, but we cannot be complacent, nor can we afford to ignore how our neighbours view our vulnerability. Today it is this image of vulnerability which constitutes an immediate threat to our national security. The factors enumerated here are meant to advocate that India should be extremely cautious in the coming months and keep an extra vigilant security watch. While we cannot afford to be seen to be provocative (however unjustified that image may be), we cannot also afford to be seen to be weak and vacillating. Above all, irrespective of serious mistakes that may have been committed by various parties and persons, and irrespective of their permitting themselves to be manipulated for parochial considerations of various kinds, our political leadership (both in power and in opposition) should realise that to weaken India's immunity system can be extremely dangerous. India's security requires collective commitment on the part of the all, not to aggravate our political instability. Patriotism should prevail over all other considerations.

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Tough Times In China

The wave of student demonstrations in favour of democracy and freedom, which has swept through nearly a dozen cities in China, shows no signs of abating despite a government ban on them. In the latest incidents, several thousand students took to the streets in Beijing and in the eastern town of Suzhou reiterating their demands in a cocky defiance of a stern sermon delivered in an editorial appearing only the day before in the country's major newspapers. The editorial ominously recalled that while democracy in China is at present far from perfect, it is "unconstitutional to oppose the leadership of the Communist Party and socialism and anyone who does so opposes the whole people". Over the past four weeks senior Chinese officials have upbraided the students in similarly strong terms leaving them in no doubt that any further attempt to promote the cause of "bourgeois" democracy as though "the moonlight of capitalist society was brighter than our sun" would be resisted firmly. If the students have not thought it necessary to heed these warnings it is at least early because they have been responding to other signals emanating from the leadership. Not only have several articles published in authoritative journals endorsed their demands but at the local levels party and government officials, too, have treated them with uncustomary courtesy and even understanding. Some have indeed gone so far as to accept the demand for student representation in local, elected bodies. The students have obviously concluded from all this that they enjoy support in the highest echelons of the leadership and that their actions are blessed by none other than Mr Deng Xiaoping himself.

This could indeed be the case but only up to a point. On a surface view, the massive student demonstrations would appear to consolidate the position of those forces in the party hierarchy which favour more radical reforms, and at a faster pace, than those which have been implemented since 1979 when the reform process was initiated by Mr Deng Xiaoping. A popular show of support would be useful on checking the advance of those opposed to reforms, especially at a time when preparations are afoot for the 13th party congress scheduled for next October. On that occasion the party is expected to deliberate on new reforms in all major fields of activity and, no less important, decide on the post-Deng Xiaoping leadership. But those favouring reforms cannot be unaware of the considerable risks involved in encouraging the student demonstrations. For one thing, the students nurse several grievances such as inadequate stipends, high tuition fees and shoddy living conditions which the authorities are not in a position to redress in view of the paucity of resources, on the one hand, and the emphasis on a more efficient use of these resources on the other. They have reasons to feel nervous on this score, especially because in recent months industrial workers have also resorted to various forms of protest to highlight their discontent with rising prices and falling incomes. For another, the reformists have taken care to limit reforms to the economic and administrative fields so as not to disturb the principal dogmas upholding the system—the Communist Party's monopoly of power and public ownership of the means of production.

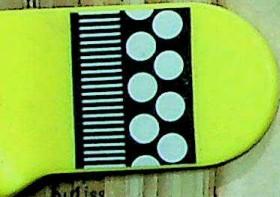
The students' clamour for democracy, respect for human rights and greater freedoms, though awkwardly articulated, sharply rebut these dogmas and they could, if not checked in time, pose grim dangers to the system. Finally, the continuance of the student demonstrations, and the extension of the protest movement to include industrial workers, could swiftly result in anarchy which every Chinese ruler abhors and fears. But do these dangers not accrue from the leadership's failure to define its goals with greater clarity and to admit that once reforms are initiated in the economic and administrative fields they will necessarily spill over into the political field as well? The absence of clear direction at the top spells confusion which in turn provokes the kind of groundswell protest the country has witnessed during the past few days. All in all the problem facing China is not a law-and-order problem; it is a political one for which no facile solution is in sight.

As a prominent writer, Wei Jingsheng, once observed, China's present plight has been caused by "autocratic rulers, by fascism under a Marxist-Leninist signboard by totalitarianism and by those who toyed with hundreds of millions of human lives according to the vagaries of a small number of persons." Written in early 1979 when the "democracy wall" symbolised the aspirations of the *intelligentsia*, this text earned for the writer fifteen years behind the bars without a public trial. Wei Jingsheng is now half-way through his term. There are no signs that he might be released in the wake of the student demonstrations.

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Political Commentary

Reliving A Nightmare

By INDER MALHOTRA

WATCHING the New Delhi scene during the 33 days since the fateful Friday which also happened to be the thirteenth day of March has been like having the same nightmare a second time. The country, it seemed, had regressed into history and landed itself yet again in the excruciating days of March-April 1975.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi's government appeared to be as thoroughly shaken now as that of his mother's was then. Questions about the durability of the Prime Minister's leadership and even the country's stability began to be asked.

Ironically, the whole sordid spectacle was so easily avoidable. Indeed, given the sea-change in the situation during the intervening years, it is astonishing that the crisis atmosphere was allowed to develop at all.

In the early months of 1975, Mrs Indira Gandhi was confronted by the formidable J.P. movement. Massive economic discontent, born of a savage drought over two successive years, unpaid bills of the Bangladesh war and the almost overnight quadrupling of the world oil prices, stalked the land. It was compounded by countrywide outrage against rampant corruption. On the top of it, a large section of the intelligentsia had lost faith in Mrs Gandhi's democratic credentials.

All those catastrophic conditions are today conspicuous by their absence, except for one and in relation to that, too, the parallel is only partial. It is appalling political ineptitude, therefore, that has spawned our present misfortune. For this the Prime Minister and the blundering bunch of his confidants, aides and acolytes cannot disclaim their responsibility.

The only issue common to the middle of the last decade and the second half of the current one is that of corruption in high places and until Mr V.P. Singh's abrupt shift from finance to defence barely a month before the presentation of the budget even this issue was not particularly live. Since then, however, it has escalated to alarming proportions.

Key Question

The impression that Mr Singh's late night transfer on January 24 was intended to "shield" some privileged persons with "right connections" who had salted away hoards of ill-gotten wealth in the vaults of Swiss banks has been steadily strengthened as each day has passed since the Fairfax issue burst into the open.

Mr V.P. Singh's unilateral decisions to institute an inquiry into an alleged Rs 30-crore payoff (kick-back is a singularly inapt expression in this context) has cost him his cabinet post, as it was bound to, given the circumstances in which he acted. But the manner in which the Congress Party, including Mr Singh's former cabinet colleagues, have reacted to his move is hardly calculated to enhance the public's confidence in the government's probity.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi's reputation as "Mr Clean" is at stake and, for the first time since he came to power, alarm over corruption in high places

shows signs of turning into outrage. The problem has not disappeared with Mr Singh's exit. Nor will it. It has to be faced squarely so that the people's trust in the government's moral authority to rule can be restored.

The key question, however, is whether the future will be held hostage to the same lack of political skill and moral courage that has bedevilled the recent past, or whether the government can be expected to be both more purposeful and more open. Time alone can tell.

Meanwhile, so great, indeed, obsessive, has been everyone's interest in the domestic dimensions of the dismal drama that little attention has been paid to its international fall-out which can be ignored only at our peril.

Not to put any gloss on a painful situation, this country's stock the world over has slumped in five short weeks, to the sorrow of friends and glee of others.

Soviet Reaction

Important visitors from the Soviet Union in recent days have reaffirmed emphatically India's primacy in the Soviet scheme of things "outside the socialist bloc". At the same time, however, they have candidly confessed to being "worried" over some of the internal developments here. Nor has Moscow made any secret of its unhappiness over the hostility of the CPM and the CPI to Mr Rajiv Gandhi, though neither Mr Jyoti Basu nor Mr Rajeswara Rao has taken kindly to this "fraternal" criticism.

The Soviet reaction is exceptional. Other powers have not been so understanding. Some of them are, in fact, depicting India as a "flabby" and somewhat laughable "giant". A global survey of international opinion is not possible in available space. Attention must be focussed, therefore, on reactions in the United States and Pakistan for reasons which are much too obvious to need recounting.

Pakistani newspapers and politicians have interpreted the decision of the U.S. Congress to cut the measly \$ 50 million American aid to this country by \$ 15 million as an "insult" to this country. They are not the only ones watching whether the affront would be pocketed. Within this country, opinion is growing that New Delhi should courteously tell Washington to keep its aid intended for India to itself to meet its own whopping trade deficit. South Block, however, is reluctant to take this advice.

Policy makers feel, not entirely without justification, that to react in a huff to something done by Congress or really by three Republican Congressmen, would be needlessly to accelerate the downhill trend in Indo-U.S. relations. Such a reaction, they argue could also jeopardise the much more valuable assistance from IDA, the soft-loans window of the World Bank and perhaps complicate the issue of textile quotas.

Avoidable bad relations with the U.S. must, of course, be avoided. But the other side of the coin is that failure to react adequately to something which might impinge on the high hopes pinned by Washington

on Mr Rajiv Gandhi's government had failed to materialise. Since then his weakening position at home appears to have intensified American proclivity to treat India with scant consideration.

The Reagan administration's own credibility and prestige, have reached rock bottom thanks to Irancon and Contragate. And yet it has chosen blandly to accept as a fact of life Pakistan's nuclear capability and to make the \$ 4.02-billion package of military and economic aid to Pakistan immune from the Symington Amendment. Regardless of Indian concerns, AWACS are likely to be given to Pakistan and the possibility of a credit line for this purpose, in addition to the \$ 4.02-billion package, is being discussed.

On top of it, not merely Congress but also the administration are reading Indian magisterial lectures that it should either sign the NPT or enter into some other agreement with Pakistan to the same effect or lump the Pakistani bomb.

One senator has had the impertinence to talk of India's "incredible irresponsibility" over the nuclear issue in South Asia. This can perhaps be excused because many senators in America are innocent souls and have a very hazy idea of international affairs.

But what is one to say about Mr Richard Perle, assistant secretary of defence for international security policy and an "intellectual giant" in the Reagan administration? He has given India the gratuitous advice that it should take a leaf from Egypt's book and reduce its "ignominious dependence" on the Soviet Union! Have both the foreign office in New Delhi and the Indian embassy in Washington become dysfunctional? Otherwise someone should have by now told this worthy to keep his pearls of wisdom to himself.

Pakistan's own cockiness towards this country these days, contrasting so sharply with the mood across the border at the time of Brasstacks, stems from its newly acquired nuclear prowess and is accentuated by its perception that the entire Indian political system is at sixes and sevens; that the U.S. no longer takes India seriously while the Soviet Union is "wooning" Pakistan; and that the Indian giant may well be tottering.

Ominous Meaning

It is against this backdrop that General Zia-ul-Haq's latest and utterly unacceptable statement on Kashmir has to be viewed. Gone are the days when the Kashmir issue was to be settled in accordance with the Simla agreement, or according to the U.N. resolutions alone. All three formulations have been made by Islamabad from time to time. Mr Agha Hilaly's offensive attempt to bracket Kashmir with Palestine was explained away and not repeated afterwards.

However, Gen. Zia has now proclaimed Kashmir to be like Afghanistan, "Afghanistan", he has added, "is occupied by Russia; Kashmir by India". The ominous meaning of this cannot be lost even on the meanest intelligence. What on the meanest intelligence. What has emboldened the general to take this tack should also be obvious.

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of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to tickle that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Rajiv Gandhi On Defensive End Of His Brave New World

By HARISH KHARE

NEITHER the Lok Sabha nor the Rajya Sabha is going to debate the issues raised by President Zail Singh's letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Meanwhile the Prime Minister is reported to have replied to the President. Though the contents of Mr Gandhi's letter are not known, somehow the word has spread that he has used a rather "moderate" tone.

Yet it is also obvious that the Prime Minister has expressed no regret nor offered an apology for his less than correct and proper behaviour towards the President. In fact, the Prime Minister is reported to have told reporters in Calcutta that he stands by his statement of March 2 in the Lok Sabha. In other words, for all the din and noise in the two Houses of Parliament, there is no hint of any realisation on Mr Gandhi's part that he has committed grave impropriety in his desire to excommunicate Mr Zail Singh from the scheme of governance.

On the other hand, the nation is being implored to put an end to this unhappy controversy. The argument is that even if Mr Rajiv Gandhi's behaviour towards Mr Zail Singh was (or is) regrettable, no national purpose would be served by making the Prime Minister eat humble pie. Any insistence of an expression of regret from Mr Gandhi would only erode the power and prestige of the office of the Prime Minister. Moreover, if Mr Gandhi is pushed to the wall he may end up by opting for a servile person to be the next President of the republic, and that would certainly lower the dignity of that high office. The argument indeed boils down to a plea to humour Mr Gandhi along in his waywardness.

Dangerous Twist

Some of the Prime Minister's supporters even give the argument a different and dangerous twist. They suggest that the Prime Minister is really not obliged to follow either the letter or the spirit of Article 78 (which makes it the Prime Minister's duty to communicate all decisions of the council of ministers as well as to furnish such information relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union as the President may call for). According to this line of reasoning, the Prime Minister is free to ignore a constitutional obligation because he is the trustee of people's mandate.

This unstated assertion of Prime Ministerial immunity from a constitutional injunction is perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the controversy. Mr Rajiv Gandhi's rather whimsical ways are by now all too well known. He can—as he has been—be imperious towards his cabinet colleagues, chief ministers, senior bureaucrats without inviting any kind of censure, except a gentle rap on the knuckle for forgetting good manners and courtesies becoming of a gentleman. But what is now being demanded is that he be exempted from even observing a few chores, well spelt out in the Constitution.

And, mind you, no one in defence of Mr Zail Singh has suggested that the Prime Minister should accept or follow the President's advice. What is being insisted upon is that Mr Gandhi should not deny Mr Zail Singh the legitimate role that he enjoys under the Constitution. It has even been insinuated that the Prime Minister was well advised in keeping the President in the dark about important policy decisions like the Punjab accord or the Mizoram accord because Mr Zail Singh and his staff could not be relied upon to keep secret information secret. This is a serious allegation. The President of the republic is condemned, merely on hearsay, as being in league with anti-national elements. If the Prime Minister had any concrete evidence to back up the apprehension, then he failed in his duty to start impeachment proceedings under Article 61.

Serious Charge

If there was no proof to substantiate the charge—as seems to be the case—then the Prime Minister can be accused of allowing a rather base prejudice to colour his judgment. Apart from unkindness to Mr Zail Singh the individual or Mr Zail Singh the President, the premise is that the Prime Minister is the keeper of the chalice and would be final interpreter of what is best for the country.

It is indeed a strange reading of the Constitution to suggest that the Prime Minister is really not beholden to observe the fiat of Article 78. Pray, then, why restrict this permissiveness to Article 78? What is so sacrosanct about other constitutional provisions like Article 85? If one part of the Constitution is deemed to be dispensable, then the principle can be extended to any other part.

Interestingly enough, it has not been argued, at least not yet, that Article 78 stands in the way of fulfilling people's aspiration. In the past this was the favoured stratagem to chuck a part of the Constitution. Even then, the accent was on amending an offending constitutional provision, in accordance with the prescribed procedure, rather than simply to assert that the Prime Minister need not heed it.

The Prime Minister's refrain is clear: that, in the exercise of the awesome power he wields in the name of the Indian state, he is not prepared to accept letters of any kind, not even going through the motion of calling once a fortnight upon the head of the republic. Indeed, a case for an arrogant and autocratic exercise of power is being unabashedly asserted. But what is being forgotten is that both Mr Rajiv Gandhi and Mr Zail Singh derive legitimacy from the same source: the Constitution of India.

However, the situation is not all that bleak. Mr Rajiv Gandhi has already paid a heavy political price. Thanks to Mr Zail Singh's assertion of his constitutional prerogatives, the Prime Minister has been forced

to be nice to Congressmen whom he has described as power-brokers, interested only in lining their pockets.

Take, for instance, Mr Nawal Kishore Sharma's philippic about the conspiracy of the right reactionaries. It would suggest a return of the much-disdained popular rhetoric. Just when after two years of tutoring in the nuances of the official ideology of pragmatism, Congressmen were beginning to absorb Mr Gandhi's lessons that it was wrong to think in terms of hackneyed clichés like "left" or "right", "reactionary" or "progressives", the country is informed that indeed reactionaries are lurking about in abundance out to undo the wonderful work of a great leader.

President Zail Singh has, in fact, the gratitude of every Congressman. During the last two years the Prime Minister's demeanour was that he could not care less for the Congress and the Congressmen; that he would rather lend his ears to the Bachchans, the Rami Chopras, the Rajiv Sethis, the Romesh Bhandaris, etc; and that those like Mr Narasimha Rao, Mr Buta Singh, Mr Shiv Shankar would be made use of, but barely tolerated and would never be accepted. The Prime Minister can now at least be expected to be somewhat circumspect in dealing with Congressmen of some standing.

Haughty Outlook

Indeed, the kind of truculence and insolence that was displayed against Mr Kamalapati Tripathi and Mr Pranab Mukherjee has given way to quiet accommodation of Mr Sripat Mishra, Mr P.C. Sethi. Earlier the very need to divide and rule the disgruntled elements was frowned upon; everybody—and that means everybody—survived and flourished on Mr Gandhi's sufferance. That haughty outlook is perceptibly modified. Now Mr J.B. Patnaik must be amused, a scandal-scarred Mr S.B. Chavan embraced, and the judgment of the brokers' broker, Mr K. Karunakaran must be respected.

More importantly, the so-called "high command" no longer inspires the awe it did only a few months ago. The Congressmen can also calculate and have in fact calculated that alter the elections in Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Kerala will come the presidential poll, and then the crucial test, in Haryana. They know a besieged Prime Minister is not going to disturb the prevailing arrangements in the states. By the same token, the dissidents all over are making bold to register their presence.

Mr Gandhi may or may not succeed in chucking the Constitution, but in order to deal with Mr Zail Singh's challenge he has already been made to abandon many planks of his original platform of a clean, innovative, dynamic government. Indeed, it can be argued that much of Mr Rajiv Gandhi's *raison d'état* has withered away.

Ambiguity Need Not Mean Inaction

THE defence minister's announcement in the Lok Sabha on April 27 that Pakistan's single-minded pursuit of its nuclear weapons programme was "forcing us to review our option" has been rightly considered as the farthest he could go to indicate to our people, especially our jawans, and to the rest of the world that India may have to respond to the Pakistani challenge in kind. This may prove to be the beginning of an era of nuclear policy of ambiguity for us. But whether the government means business or not is not likely to be known for quite some time. In the past the country has witnessed false starts. The imperatives of a policy of ambiguity also warrant that the issue should not be probed too far and the government cannot and should not make any further announcements.

Let us first deal with the false starts. In 1965 the same Mr K.C. Pant, as a young MP, led the campaign at the Durgapur session of the Congress Party to persuade the then Prime Minister, Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri, to review and change India's nuclear policy in the wake of the Chinese nuclear test of 1964. Mr Pant is not one of those who would take the complacent view that having lived with the Chinese bomb all these years we can afford to live with the Pakistani bomb. Unlike many others he can recall vividly the degree of insecurity the Chinese nuclear test creates in this country. In response to the pressure from his rank and file, Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri made a change of nuance in the declaratory policy of the government. From the position that India would never go in for nuclear weapons, he shifted it to the one that India would not make the nuclear weapon just as yet.

Even as he made this change in the declaratory policy he acted more decisively in private. He sanctioned Dr Bhabha's request to proceed with subterranean nuclear explosive project (SNEP). Dr Bhabha and a small team of his colleagues set to work on the project which was to result finally in the Pokharan test in May 1974. Tragically for this country, Dr Homi Bhabha died in the plane crash on Mont Blanc on the day the new Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, was sworn in on January 24, 1971.

No False Start

The new chairman of the department of atomic energy, Dr Vikram Sarabhai, unlike Dr Bhabha, was not a believer in India having a nuclear deterrent. The first two years of Mrs Gandhi's premiership were marked by a strong western influence on the small circle of her close advisers. With the death of Dr Bhabha and because of the fact that the decision was so secret that even in the atomic energy department only a handful knew about it and perhaps fewer among the senior cabinet members and the Prime Minister's advisers, the project was not pursued further. This was India's first false start on the nuclear explosive programme.

After six years in office and full of confidence and assertiveness in the flush of Bangladesh victory, Mrs Gandhi authorised the department of atomic energy to go ahead with a peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) project sometime in the later half of 1972. The scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) led by Dr Ramanna and Dr P.K.

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

Iyengar delivered the goose on May 1, 1974. This time it was not a false start. But what followed was worse. We did not cross the finishing line. The issue of transitioning from a non-nuclear to a nuclear status was not debated within the government and various problems and pressures that were inevitably bound to arise were not anticipated.

A number of strategists in the outside world took it for granted that Pokharan would be the beginning of an Indian weapons programme. Some of them argued that if India were to go about it at a deliberate speed—may be one test a year—the world would absorb it. But apparently Mrs Gandhi had not worked out the framework for ensuring India's security in the overall international strategic environment. Her decision on Pokharan was not thought through and consequently her reaction to pressures following Pokharan was also instinctive and not cerebral. Her advisers were far more familiar with the World Bank consortia and IMF meetings than the harsher world of strategic realities. India only too readily yielded to pressure and all further work on nuclear explosions and related programmes were stopped. Just a little assertiveness and one or two more tests would have established that India was a nuclear weapons power and the world would have lined up at India's door for selling nuclear technology. This argument was applied to China by president Nixon when he said that a billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons could not be ignored.

Strategic Realities

Following the disclosures on Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons, Mrs Gandhi, back in office in 1980, reassigned Dr Ramanna as director of BARC in 1981. There were expectations that this signalled the restart of the Pokharan programme. The Americans, ever watchful, made *demande* about our preparations to conduct further tests. Apparently once again Mrs Gandhi developed cold feet and the programme did not get off to a start. It is against this background that knowledgeable individuals have reasons to worry. Our decisions have been *ad hoc*; we have not evolved a policy framework; and we do not possess a group of dedicated and knowledgeable people who would implement a policy steadfastly and with full understanding of its consequences.

In spite of our calculated ambiguity (if we are at all capable of it) and the necessary secrecy, the world, especially the western intelligence sources, would know in due course whether the Indian nuclear policy is one of meaningful ambiguity or just verbal bluff. The two policies are different and opposite of each other. Nuclear ambiguity is a policy of having the weapons in the basement while formally denying their possession. Nuclear bluff is when the nation has no such bombs in the basement but tries to pretend that it has. The latter is a dangerous game and can involve severe penalties for the country.

The crux of a policy of ambiguity is not to keep the weapons totally secret but to formally deny their possession even as one sends necessary signals to the rest of the world, particularly to one's adversaries. The Israelis have perfected this art to their maximum benefit: it all started with the Israeli president,

an eminent scientist, declaring in a speech in January 1973 that Israel was in a position to make nuclear weapons. This was followed by a carefully phrased denial that Israel would not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in West Asia nor would it be the second. That left everybody guessing.

During the fourth Arab-Israeli war in October 1973 when Israel was under pressure it was widely rumoured that it ordered the nuclear weapons to be armed and got ready in case the Arabs were able to push forward. Thereafter came a series of accounts of Israel's nuclear capability ending up with disclosures by the Israeli nuclear technicians working at Dimona, Mordochai Vanunu, to the *Sunday Times*. Israel still denies possession of a nuclear arsenal and has proposed the establishment of Middle East nuclear weapons free zone just as General Zia, an ardent follower of the Israeli example, has done in respect of South Asia.

Grave Shortcomings

The policy of ambiguity requires careful planning and orchestration and should not be mistaken for secrecy. Israel has sustained its policy in spite of numerous changes in government and hundreds of people being involved in the so-called "secret". The same is true to Pakistan. Not only General Zia-ul-Haq and his close associates but also people like Mr Agha Shahi, Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan and others cited in *Maplana Kausar Niazi's* book, and above all newspaper editors such as Mr Mushahid Hussein have been teamed up to orchestrate the ambiguity. On the other hand, our own history speak of an *ad hoc* decision-making process confined to a few persons who do not have the time or background to think though a framework of policy is counter productive.

Pokharan was a different affair. At that stage when an R and D effort was involved and it was necessary to spring a total surprise on the world, it was appropriate to keep the programme a secret. Today the situation is different. If we are to go in for a bomb in the basement, an industrial effort will be involved. In due course our armed forces will have to be apprised of it to give them confidence and to enable them to develop a relevant doctrine and to have secure command and control and safety procedures. All these efforts cannot be totally hidden, especially from foreign intelligence agencies. Therefore a policy of ambiguity involves the creation of a smoke-screen to create confusion and uncertainty among our adversaries and not among ourselves. Ambiguity is not a passive policy but an active one.

This country has not so far paid adequate attention to developing expertise on international strategic issues either in the bureaucracy (both defence and foreign office) or among the academia, let alone the politicians. This in turn has created a vested interest in preventing a new generation of trained and knowledgeable successors from coming up, in avoiding extensive discussions within the government and developing policy frameworks. Any review of our nuclear policy should start with setting right these grave shortcomings in knowledge and competence.

✓ Friday, January 21, 1983

THE PIONEER

Pak N-bomb on way?

INDIA'S fears about Pakistan going nuclear are by no means unfounded. 'Newsweek' reported recently that despite repeated assurances by President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq that Pakistan would not build a nuclear bomb, there was a "disturbing array of evidence" that it was trying to assemble the components of such a weapon. Supporting this view, a Vienna despatch claims that Pakistan "may acquire nuclear weapons covertly without being caught" like South Africa in 1979 and still hope to get sophisticated arms from the United States on the ground that such supplies would discourage Islamabad from relying entirely on nuclear force. According to analysts, once Pakistan acquires nuclear capability, the United States may be forced to help it develop a sound command and communications system to reduce the chances of accidents, not excluding war. Money is apparently no problem for Pakistan in its unholy quest. The 'Wall Street Journal' states that the 300-million-dollar Libyan aid to Pakistan for developing an atomic bomb "carries out a secret written agreement between Libya and Pakistan". The journal adds: "Some Western sources believe that there is nothing in the document pledging a Pakistani quid pro quo but others say that Gaddafi still wants to have the first bomb."

It is difficult to believe that the U.S. Administration is blissfully unaware of what is going on. According to the BBC, the Reagan Administration has itself revealed that Pakistan is pursuing a nuclear weapons programme with the help of China and, within a year's time, it will have the necessary material to build such weapons. Nevertheless, Washington naively contends that supply of sophisticated military hardware by the U.S. "would create a sense of confidence and security in Pakistan's mind". The United States' call not to sell nuclear technology to Pakistan was just an eyewash and it has not been taken seriously by its Western allies. West Germany, Belgium and Switzerland have evinced keen interest in the global tender recently floated by Pakistan for the construction of a new 900 MW nuclear power station at Chashma in Punjab province. One of the reasons for the quick response by the three West European countries to Pakistan's invitation is said to be the acute and continuing depression in the world nuclear market. The demand has slackened due to clash of economic interests between the United States, which acquired the monopoly of world nuclear fuel supplies, and European suppliers of power plants offering the technology of fuel fabrication and reprocessing in the package.

What has enabled Pakistan to pursue its nuclear weapons programme in the utmost secrecy is the absence of adequate safeguards. The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Hans Blix, was questioned on the subject at a press conference in New Delhi last month and he expressed his inability to deny or confirm that diversion of nuclear materials to non-peaceful purposes had taken place in Pakistan. He explained that the Agency was inspecting only the nuclear reactor at Karachi and there was no inspection of other parts of the nuclear programme of that country. Meanwhile President Zia continues to swear by the peaceful nature of Pakistan's nuclear programme. During his visit to the United States in December last, he vehemently denounced what he called "an orchestrated campaign" to impute falsely to his peaceful atomic programme a "non-existent military dimension". However, few are willing to take his word for it. Lively speculation about the timing of Pakistan's maiden nuclear explosion continues and the general opinion is that it will be sooner rather than later.

1983 More On Pak B

The well known Pakistani newspaper *Muslim* has confirmed that Dr. Abd Qadir Khan, uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta, spoke Nayyar. Since it is an open secret that the editor was present during the talk, this confirmation issue as far as the fact of the interview is concerned by the summary published in Indian *Muslim* editorial has also said it virtually in that Dr. Khan told the Indian journalist that manufactured a nuclear weapon. It has many interesting points as well. According to it, the interview are not a surprise: these only confirm Pakistani "people have generally felt outside world have suspected". The government approach is guided by the tactical consideration of annoying the Americans". This policy is well done to send a message to India to keep Pakistan and to the United States not to link package with the bomb since the bomb accomplished fact. These comments in timing—January 28—of the interview was. It did coincide with the military build-up of Pakistan border and preparation by the US of its aid package for Pakistan for presentation. Dr. Khan obviously expected the interview soon—towards the end of January or early before or during the secretary-level talks in led to an agreement on a partial withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the border. He anticipated that the publication would be delayed for well over four weeks. But imagine the Indian public opinion if the interview was published before or during the talks.

We have said earlier that it is possible that the interview was cleared by President Zia himself. It was even if we assume for the sake of argument that Khan spoke on his own, it cannot be denied to convey a threat to India and that this has been credible because it is widely believed that Pakistan is close to manufacturing a nuclear bomb. And the point is that the threat can be repeated with vision on the border. Such threats have been made by America's in Korea, Vietnam and West against China—and there is no good reason why they will not be against us. The conclusion is need to be spelled out.

Promotion Policies In Civil Services

By M.N. BUCH

THE happenings of the recent past, in which the foreign secretary sought premature retirement and two senior secretaries dealing with rural India were quite unfairly castigated in public by the Prime Minister are still fresh in memory. Civil service morale, which in any case has not been very high ever since 1967, was dealt a severe blow by this totally uncalled for humiliation of its senior members. A further body blow has now been delivered by the wholly arbitrary promotion of officers to the level of secretary in the central government.

The 1955 and 1956 batches of the IAS came within the zone of consideration for promotion with a certain degree of overlap in that officers from both are serving as additional secretaries at Delhi. There is a convention that promotion to the level of additional secretary and secretary is done by selection from amongst those serving as joint secretaries or equivalents in the Centre or the states, with both levels being considered as of the highest level of responsibility under government. Once an officer is cleared for additional secretary, normally he could be fit to hold a secretary's charge also, unless he does something really outrageous and blots his copy book. The nearest equivalent in the army would be that of G.O.Cs-in-C of army commands vis-a-vis the chief of the army staff. Any army commander should, in the normal course, be considered fit to become C.O.A.S., but only one is selected because there is only one post at the top. The Civil service pyramid, however, is wider at the top, except at the level of cabinet secretary. Therefore, any additional secretary can legitimately expect selection as secretary more or less as a matter of course.

In fact there is an underlying assumption that within such services as IAS, Indian Foreign Service, IPS, Indian Forest Service and IA, and AS, the difference in quality between the senior most and junior-most officer in a batch and as between batches not far separate in seniority, is so marginal as to be almost non-existent. In other words, at the time of recruitment all officers are more or less equal.

In terms of postings and experience, the initial ten or fifteen years tend to give a fairly uniform range to all officers. Differences emerge only in the manner in which the personality of individual officers develop as their careers advance. Like any other group of individuals, civil servants also grow in varied degrees as they ripen with experience. Some are dedicated idealists, others became cynics; some develop the habit of hard work whilst others prefer to be lotus eaters; some are true blue honest whilst others yield to temptation; some are fighters whilst others surrender to politicians; some are oriented to serve whilst others became rank careerists. As they move up the rungs of seniority some officers rise in position whilst others are side tracked.

Secret Of Morale

It is in the manner that people are raised in height or are side tracked in which lies the secret of morale. If government are seen to be patently fair in assessing their officers, if job requirements, criteria for promotion and the method of selection are clearly laid down and widely known

and subjective decision making that it has made a mockery of the all-India nature of the IAS, IPS and IFS. How else does one explain the rejection of a person such as C. Badrinath of the Tamil Nadu cadre for even a single posting under the Centre? He is difficult and controversial, but he is also intellectually brilliant and honest to boot. For him the Centre has no place. I can point out 50 officers in the IAS alone who perhaps deserve weeding out on grounds of lack of moral fibre but who have had repeated central postings because our selection procedures are defective. If any one factor can be singled out as the most damaging to service morale, I would opt for the highly parochial, subjective and unfair method of selection for deputation, posting to so called prize posts and promotion.

Equally serious is the total ad hominem on the one hand and the sheer nepotism on the other in selection for certain ministries or jobs. There was a time when I felt that there were 5 sons or sons-in-law of prominent people in the commerce ministry. Mr P.C. Sethi, then chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, corrected me and pointed out 11. No service can have cohesion, *esprit-de-crops*, or a high morale under these conditions. Even the present government has introduced no element of cadre planning to the services and, if anything, continues to play favourites with even more vigour than before.

After the latest round of promotion to the post of secretary of the 1957 batch of IAS I took a quick look at the position of the officers of the 1956 and 1957 batches serving as additional secretaries at Delhi. I have excluded those who were not selected for promotion from joint secretary to additional secretary.

Assessment Methods

There are six officers of 1956 who come in this category, whose juniors have been promoted over their heads. Similarly there are five officers of 1956 who are senior to Anil Bordia, the last officer promoted to secretary. As I belonged to the 1956 batch before quitting the IAS, I can speak with some authority about my batchmates. Anil Bordia is absolutely top class, being efficient, honest, dedicated and in every way suited for promotion. But each one of the other five officers not promoted is equally good and not one deserves supersession. Nor can one explain why Umashankar of 1956, an officer with over five years experience as joint secretary at the Centre and four years as education secretary of Kerala has been passed over for posting as education secretary or its equivalent in the human resources development ministry. Every one welcomes the promotion of an officer such as Anil Bordia, for his contribution, especially in the field of education, is significant, but how does one justify the supersession of equally good officers? Each one of them not only would have a legitimate ground for grievance — their example would dishearten a great number of their junior colleagues, in whose eyes an injustice has been done.

Why can the government not prescribe procedures for promotion? Why do they fight shy of

institutionalising the method? Obviously because being looked for is not necessary for the job. Otherwise, there could not be a duality of approach about people considered fit for central deputation and those condemned (by implication) to service in the states. How is a joint secretary in a central ministry a better person than a secretary to a state government.

No government can rule effectively if its instruments are disgruntled or suffer from a feeling of manifest injustice. Will the government of India see wisdom and reverse the present trends? Or do we see a further drop in morale of those who implement policy? These are questions which Mr Rajiv Gandhi must ask himself and answer.

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brought into line. It is not that national priorities, The kind of priorities they are unaware of the problems that is going on today has already done enough damage to them. They know it only too well.

Crisis Of Leadership

Lack Of Norms And Accountability

By SURINDAR SURI

In India not only do we already have a large number of leaders, but their number is proliferating. But meanwhile the quality of leadership is declining even faster. It is not a very difficult question to answer whether the proliferation of leaders is due to the decline in quality or vice-versa. It should be obvious that the decline in quality is responsible for numerical inflation.

In every university there are student leaders, leaders of employees of the different classes from the fourth to the first, of teachers of different levels and grades. When one considers the various factions and sub-factions one might get the impression that there are more leaders than there are followers.

In the university or college the key relationship should be that between teachers and students but it presupposes qualities of educational leadership. But our universities and colleges work on the assumption that the teacher-student interaction does not require proper human ties. Such a disruption of the human relationship in institutions of higher learning causes the proliferation of leaders of all types at all levels who then begin to draw upon and benefit from the disruption of the core teacher-student nexus relationship. Protests by students against the teachers lead to one kind of strikes; in retaliation the teachers provoke strikes against the administration.

General Feeling

The situation in centres of higher education has been deteriorating for quite some time. But the general feeling among the political leaders was that the universities and other educational institutions provided a convenient outlet for the growing social unrest. However it has become clear by now that what happens in educational institutions today is liable to be repeated elsewhere the day after. By now the disease of mis-leadership has spread to virtually all strata of society and to all areas of public life. In the relations between workers and managers in factories or other industrial and commercial establishments the growing chaos parallels that in the educational institutions. In fact, the relations between the works manager or supervisor and workers are not unlike that between the teacher and students. Here again the ties have been rendered abstract and dehumanised. At this level as at so many others, the presence of leadership qualities is necessary. Otherwise there will be the interpenetration and disruption of the nexus of relations from one dimension to the other.

The relations between political leaders and their supporters also suffer from a similar disorientation. One aspect of this growing disorientation is that individuals who are thoroughly irresponsible get into leadership positions and forge ahead of others. And if today some thoroughly irresponsible leaders take hold of student activism or of the labour movement, there is the likelihood of a continuously growing danger that a similar leadership might get hold of the masses. This is what happened in the countries that experienced the disastrous misery of fascism.

Considering the types of leaders

of the national cadre, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

that are now running around in the area of student affairs or labour relations, it is to be expected that similar types of leader would become active in the political field. The demoralisation and disorientation in different fields mutually reinforce each other. There may be some hope of stemming the rot in order to reverse the process of demoralisation and disorientation, but the hope is fading with each passing day.

In order to strengthen the possibility of avoiding Indo-fascism, it is important to grasp the dynamics of leadership within the framework of Indian social structure and psycho-dynamics. What is missing in India at present is the necessity of maintaining human identification between supervisors and workers, students and teachers, between seniors and juniors at all levels. The primary function of leadership is to foster sense of identity between the seniors and juniors in the pursuit of a common purpose of the institution, organisation, or society that should be as important to the leaders as it is to others. But in India the differentiation or specialisation between leaders and followers is considered more basic and primary. Teachers are regarded as qualitatively different from students and teaching as something disconnected from learning. What the trade union or political leaders does is of no direct concern to the workers or citizens, after all he is supposed to promote only his own interests.

The principle of the unity of research and teaching or the American slogan for university teachers "publish or perish" points to a basic unity, namely that a teacher who does not himself continue to be a good student through research and continuous expansion of his knowledge cannot be a good instructor. Students identify with the learner in the teacher and thereby they relate to the teacher in him and recognise the potentiality of learning within themselves.

Social Anomie

Under the dynamic condition of a society moving beyond the traditional framework as in India, it is necessary that the potentiality of growth should be recognised in the follower as in the leader. True leadership implies the possibility of growth and development in the followers. However, as important as genuine understanding of the nature of leadership is mutual reinforcement and co-ordination between different types and levels of leadership.

In most of our institutions, whether these be universities or government offices, a mechanical sense of hierarchy has taken root. This means simply that support is expected to flow primarily in one direction, namely in the reverse pecking order from lower to higher. Such mechanical understanding of organisational structure and its operation, which becomes simply the maintenance of a hierarchy for its own sake, bureaucratises all organisations. The hierarchical structure overwhelms and smothers the qualitative performance of the organisation.

The spread of normlessness or social anomie is part and parcel of the pattern and direction of

change that is taking place almost everywhere. Defining an overall goal and purpose for an organisation, or for the nation as a whole, implies that the leaders subordinate themselves to these ends. This would limit their arbitrary freedom of action and prevent them from defining their successes and failures in any way that suited them, rather than being assessed objectively and empirically by the society. When the purpose of an institution is defused and rendered vague and easy to manipulate, the social and moral control on the office-bearers is set aside. Thus it happens that the various departments of the government become increasingly non-responsible and self-serving in the narrow sense. Having reduced the purpose for which a ministry has been established to its own hierarchical and bureaucratic procedures, it is no longer answerable to the public. Its supreme loyalty is to its own procedures and red-tape norms. When a state of leaderlessness settles on a nation, it is left with only two choices. Either it continues to suffocate and decline or there is a growing anger in the masses, especially among the youth, a destructive leadership is liable to get hold of this smouldering anger and frustration. It may then burst out like a volcanic eruption or with the fury of a murderous cyclone.

Creative Role

The situation in India is not entirely hopeless as yet. In virtually every area of public activity, there are numbers of effective and honest leaders. Dispersed and atomised as they are, they have no way of reinforcing each other and thus countering the overall decline of norms and commitment. Engaged as they are in their specific activities where many of them have achieved a certain degree of success, they concentrate their attention on their particular fields of activity.

Obviously, the initial step for co-ordinating their activities and helping to raise the morale of the citizens is to understand the nature of leadership and the growing urgency of developing its quality in our country. If a negative leadership seizes the opportunity, it would be too late to mend matters. As the experience of countries that came under fascist leadership shows, no individual or group is safe once the storm begins to blow.

To argue that every revolutionary crisis is also a counter-revolutionary crisis tells us only a part of the truth. Any constructive revolution requires positive leadership of an effective kind. A national crisis has no potentiality of cumulating its positive and significant progress unless creative leadership becomes active. Today such is not the case in India.

It is no use arguing that politics is always filthy and should be shunned by those who do not want to dirty their hands. It is a fact that politics is generally in command of the overall situation and sets the tone for other activities. Hence it is necessary that correct leadership should be brought to bear upon political activities. But educational institutions play the key creative role and it is imperative that constructive leadership should be engendered in them and by them.

brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to

bring about the changes that are needed. The kind of leadership that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Pakistan's Islamic Bomb Diabolus By Bhutto's Aids

Pakistan's Islamic Bomb Disclosures By Bhutto's Aide

WHILE there are still some Indians who do not like to accept that Pakistan has reached nuclear weapons capability and may have a bomb or two in the basement, the Pakistanis have been trying hard to send signals to enable us to arrive at a correct assessment. Two of the latest signals are general Zia-ul-Haq's interview to the *Time* magazine (March 30) and the release of a book titled *Aur Line Cut Gai* by Maulana Kausar Niazi, former information minister in the Bhutto government and presently a Pakistani senator very much in with the military establishment.

General Zia-ul-Haq said in loud and clear terms, "You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a bomb whenever it wishes." He added that he had never said that Pakistan was incapable of doing this but only that it had neither the intention nor the desire. This was, of course, not true. He has made any number of statements in the past denying Pakistan's capability.

To cite just one of his scores of almost identical statements on the subject, he said on March 3, 1985, in an interview to the *Christian Science Monitor*, "Our technical knowhow does not allow us, does not give the capability at the present juncture for the making of a nuclear device. As such we have no intention of doing so." Mark his words carefully. He denied the intention of making the bomb at that juncture because Pakistan did not have the know-how. Now he admits that it possesses the know-how.

More revealing than general Zia's statement is Chapter 9 of Maulana Kausar Niazi's book titled "Unknown Facts About the Reprocessing plant." An important fact about this book in Urdu is that it was allowed to be published just as Dr A.Q. Khan was permitted to give the famous interview to Mr Kuldip Nayar which Mr Mushahid Hussain, then the editor of *The Muslim*, Islamabad, confirmed before he was silenced. "We should expect the Pakistan government to deny all that Kausar Niazi has said but only after the world has read the book. The crux of nuclear ambiguity is to send credible signals about the possession of the bomb and then blandly and formally deny the possession.

Nuclear Ambiguity

Maulana Kausar Niazi provides no joy to the innocents in this country who are willing to accept that Pakistan too runs only a civil nuclear R and D programme like India and that the offers of mutual inspection and South Asian nuclear weapons free zone are genuine. He traces the origins of the Pakistani nuclear effort from its beginning and makes it clear that prime minister Bhutto was extremely keen to make Pakistan a world power and that to acquire atomic weapons was his strongest desire and long-term dream. This is fully corroborated by Mr Bhutto's own statements in his book *The Myth Of Independence* (the myth 1969) and in his last testimony written in the death cell in 1978.

Contrary to the Pakistani propaganda, it was not the Zionists who first called the Pakistani bomb an Islamic bomb. It was Mr Bhutto who wrote, "We know that Israel and South Africa have full nuclear capability. The Christian, Jewish and Hindu civilisations have the capability. The communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilisation was without it, but that position was about to change."

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

Mushahid Hussain, the erstwhile editor of *The Muslim*, in his last editorial before he was forced to resign, too referred to the Pakistani bomb as Islamic bomb.

Maulana Kausar Niazi provides further evidence of the Islamic Association with the bomb effort. He writes, Bhutto received positive response from them, particularly from Libya, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Iran who assured him of full financial corporation. Bhutto had acquired the highest respect of the Arab world because of the help of the Pakistani army in the defeat (sic) of Israel. The Arab rulers believed that the Pakistani bomb would be their biggest guarantee against the aggression of Israel.

That Dr A.Q. Khan's R and D had no peaceful intention behind it is vividly brought out by Maulana Niazi who describes Mr Bhutto's elation once Dr Khan accepted his offer to head a separate uranium enrichment project. He writes, "I noticed that this made the prime minister very happy and in his usual way he banged the table and said, 'I will see the Hindu bastards now.' It was quite a sight to see the happiness of Bhutto.

Strategic Deception

Maulana Niazi discloses details of the strategic deception Mr Bhutto employed. He made overt moves and declarations as if plutonium reprocessing was to be the thrust of Pakistan's nuclear efforts and thereby diverting the attention of the world, particularly the US, away from his main thrust—namely the uranium enrichment project at Kahuta. The Maulana thinks that the deception worked, though he is not sure whether the US and the rest of the world did not tumble to the truth by 1978. He refers admiringly to Mr Bhutto's statements in courts and his death cell testimony in which as a patriotic Pakistani he did not utter a word about the uranium enrichment project.

Maulana Niazi does not fully explain one of Mr Bhutto's cryptic references in his death cell testimony to the greatest achievement of his life—the agreement he had concluded in June 1976 after an assiduous and tenacious endeavour spanning over eleven years. We know that this was a reference to the agreement with China on co-operation on nuclear matters, concluded on June 1, 1976, during Mr Bhutto's visit to Beijing. Maulana Niazi obviously does not want to embarrass the Chinese. It is obvious that once Mr Bhutto embarked on his search for the bomb based on uranium enrichment, he concluded the nuclear co-operation agreement with China which also made its first nuclear weapon out of enriched uranium.

Maulana Niazi's book proves that the disclosures made by the BBC *Panorama* programme, Palit's and Namboodiri's book (Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi) *Pakistan's Islamic Bomb* (1979) and Steve Weissman's and Herbert Krosney's *The Islamic Bomb* were not Zionist, western and Hindu lies. They were all accurate. The Pakistanis lied but there is no doubt that they lied in the interests of their country. I for one would not fault them on that account. The inability to assess the Pakistani strategic deception, the unwillingness to accept the incontrovertible evidence of the Pakistani nuclear weapons effort and the gullibility of significant sections of our intelligentsia who were eager to accept general

Zia's offers of South Asian nuclear weapons free zone and mutual inspection among only have earned us the ridicule and contempt of Pakistanis like Maulana Niazi who gloats over the fact that Mr Bhutto could take the world for aside.

The disclosures by Dr Khan, general Zia and Maulana Niazi are not accidental. As Mushahid Hussain put it in his last editorial, it is a message to India and the US on the arrival of the 'Islamic bomb'. The message is being sent after a careful assessment that the US has neither the desire nor the ability to penalise Pakistan and that the Indians will continue to be incapable of summoning the necessary will to respond appropriately. There is a third message to the Islamic world. Which is that Pakistan has given back to Islam its dignity and self-confidence and hence deserves the mantle of leadership. Those who indignantly ask why one should talk of the Islamic bomb when one does not talk of Christian, Jewish and Hindu bombs should raise the question why Islamic countries alone have set up an organisation of their own while there are no organisations of Christian, Jewish and Hindu countries. Those who talk of *millat* transcending national boundaries and who sustain an organisation of Islamic states cannot run away from its logic when it comes to the bomb which they have lovingly christened as 'Islamic'.

Prof Ali Mazrui talked of Islam moving from petrolisation to nuclearisation. General Zia had declared that he would personally lead the Pakistani forces if Saudi security was threatened. When there was a rumour of the desecration of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the American embassy in Islamabad was burned down, American guards were killed and American women were molested. There are more than 30,000 Pakistani servicemen all over the Islamic countries.

Maulana Kausar Niazi has referred to Pakistan sending forces to fight along with Arabs in 1973 war. Dr Khan and general Zia have denounced all information on Pakistan's nuclear efforts (now confirmed by Kausar Niazi as correct) as being anti-Islamic. In his interview to *Toronto Star* on December 16, 1982, Gen Zia even blamed it's on a supposed animosity going back to crusaders against Islam. Thus it is for Pakistan to tell us whether its bomb is only a Pakistani one or it is also an Islamic one.

Part Of Policy

The Pakistani christening of its bomb as the 'Islamic bomb' is also part of its policy of ambiguity towards Muslim, especially Arab states, so that it can continue to obtain funds from them and to claim their leadership. It does not necessarily mean that Pakistan will provide them an actual nuclear deterrence *vis-a-vis* Israel. General Zia's past record when he was on King Hussein's staff and participated in the massacre of the Palestinians and the way other Arab governments have decimated the Palestinian resistance would suggest that the Pakistani bomb is not likely to be used in the Palestinian cause. But given Pakistan's ambiguity and its potential ability to man the Saudi Arabian AWACS once they get trained on their own, the possibility of the Pakistani-Islamic bomb giving rise to misperceptions and crises cannot be ruled out.

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The Islamic Bomb

It was perhaps not necessary for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to tell a group of American journalists last week that a nuclear weapon produced by Pakistan would be an "Islamic bomb" and would be made available to Arabs. As was only to be expected, the Pakistanis have sought to score a propaganda point over this country in the Arab world by giving the Prime Minister an anti-Arab and anti-Muslim image. The Arab League's envoy at the U.N., Mr Clovis Mak-soud, has also reacted to Mr Gandhi's remarks more or less along similar lines. This would suggest that at least some Arabs are buying the Pakistani propaganda. But the affair raises several issues some of which the Arabs will need to consider. On the government of India's part, it will, of course, not do to argue that the Prime Minister was misquoted or quoted out of context or that his remarks were misunderstood by the correspondent of the *Washington Post* who is said to have asked a loaded question. These are, however, relatively small points.

Two other facts are more pertinent. First, the Pakistanis have themselves used the term "Islamic bomb" time and again ever since Mr Bhutto gave it currency in 1979. Secondly, it is no secret that the frequent references to the "Islamic bomb" have enabled Pakistan to receive encouragement for its nuclear programme in various forms from certain oil-rich Arab countries: Libya and Saudi Arabia in particular have provided assistance in cash and kind on a generous scale. It follows that the Arab countries would expect Pakistan to make a reciprocal gesture when would give them greater leverage in their dealings with both Israel and the West on the Arab-Israeli conflict. And the search for such leverage is perfectly logical, especially in the new context of undeniable evidence that Israel has become a nuclear weapons state in all but name. The West, particularly the United States, may have expressed some apprehensions about the Israeli bomb for the sake of record but it has in fact chosen to ignore it perhaps on the wholly pernicious ground that Israel, as a member of the Nuclear Club, can be trusted to be "responsible". But all that cannot and does not settle the central issue which is whether Pakistan would in fact oblige the Arabs. The chances are that it would not. Pakistan is not going to give it strategic alliance with the United States in a hurry. Islamabad receives sophisticated arms and economic assistance from the United States and simultaneously it has felt free to pursue its nuclear weapons programme. Ostensibly Pakistan receives U.S. arms on the plea that it needs these to defend itself against the Soviet threat to its security from Afghanistan. But it sees India as its principal enemy and deploys its armed forces and armour accordingly. To an extent leading Arab governments acquiesce in this arrangement. This must cause India concern. It is about time the Arabs began paying attention to this aspect of the problem posed by the Pakistani bomb. Reciprocity alone can provide the basis for mutual trust, understanding and friendship in relations between nations on a durable basis.

Polemics Mark Meet Of Literary Critics

By NEMI CHANDRA JAIN

At a time when the dramatic growth of the electronic audio-visual media appears to question the relevance of the written word, some anxiety and self-searching among writers, including literary critics, is not surprising. Add to this the fact that social and political tensions tend to polarise literary activity. Questions of freedom of the critic, his relationship with the contemporary social conflicts, on the one hand, and with tradition, on the other, acquire an edge of urgency. Indeed, in an atmosphere where the publication of a story or the staging of a play can rouse passions leading to widespread disturbances and bloodshed, the freedom of a literary critic is seriously curtailed if it is not altogether snuffed out.

Is there, then, any possibility of a free unfettered enquiry and assessment of the forces active in society or the world around and its treatment in literary works? Can there be a dialogue between authors and critics, and between critics themselves, with different philosophical, social and aesthetic approaches and is the relationship of literary creative activity with the political forces and movements of the times? Can literature be judged without some reference to moral values which are in turn constantly modified by the changing co-relations and patterns of behaviour?

Vital Issues

These and many other vital issues connected with literary criticism, judgement and analysis were articulated at a recent gathering of Hindi literary critics at Bhopal called Samavaya, sponsored by *Poorvagraha*, a literary bi-monthly published by the Bharat Bhawan. This first conference, inaugurated by the eminent Hindi author, Mr S.H. Vatsyayana, had among its participants a number of literary critics and creative writers of almost four generations and of various schools and diverse persuasions.

Under the general rubric "Criticism And Society" the participants discussed the relationship of criticism with tradition, politics, contemporary culture, communication, as well as the question of freedom or autonomy of criticism.

To some extent, the tone of the discussions was set by the opening statement of the poet-critic Mr Asok Vajpeyi, the editor of *Poorvagraha* and convenor of the gathering. After underlining the absence of curiosity and search for new ideas and mutual isolation leading to lack of debate in the world of Hindi criticism, he raised a number of other related questions.

While the session of tradition, history and criticism, with two papers by Mr Ramesh Chandra Shah and M. Vishnukant Shastri tended to meander into the expected and somewhat academic tracks, it was in the session on freedom or autonomy of criticism that the discussion warmed up. The three presentations by Rammurti Tripathi, Vageesh Shukla and Namvar Singh brought out three different—academic, orthodox Indian and neo-Marxist—approaches to the very concept of freedom and its meaning or relevance in literary criticism.

Mr Namvar Singh, particularly, relating himself to some of the ideas of the great Hindi critic, the late Ram Chandra Shukla, emphasised the importance of the state of freedom of expression. He found that, given the model system of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

tist political establishments who fight their political battles through so-called literary criticism, and thus make literature their "political colony". He thought literature was being treated as if it was in the grip of an imaginary cold war and therefore, divided between two totally opposite camps. As a result, a writer's membership of a literary organisation rather than the text of his work has become the basis of critical evaluation.

It was undoubtedly a provocative paper which touched upon a disturbing malady of the current Hindi literary scene. Still it failed to evoke much discussion, possibly because of its generalised approach as also its somewhat oblique language. Most of the observations which followed rambled around a few more generalities and clichés.

There was a little more animated exchange of ideas in the discussion on contemporary culture, communication and criticism, initiated by another young critic, Purushottam Agrawal. Evoking the existing social, political and cultural climate, he asked whether it was possible, necessary or desirable to resist the communication revolution taking place today? He emphasised the horror of its impact when used by the political establishment. It led to moral perversion and disintegration of personal relations. In such a situation, criticism should not remain merely a dialogue between the experts, but it should assist both the creative writers as well as common people in taking moral decisions.

In the ensuing discussion, the sociologist Dr P.C. Joshi, who had earlier underlined the dangers of narrow specialisation and need for literary criticism to relate itself with new ideas coming up in diverse fields of human endeavour and enquiry, asked the literary and other creative people to adopt a more positive attitude towards new technological innovations. He was of the view that only by an active intervention by the cultural workers in the debates and uses of new communication tools can their misuse be checked or at least minimised.

New Shackles

Mr S.H. Vatsyayana, who in his inaugural address had emphasised that for a writer society means only those people whom he can directly address, was of the opinion that the new advances in communication bring new shackles for a writer. It is therefore, necessary for him to say aloud how much of this growth is inevitable and how much an imposition by the establishment. In his view, literature is the only area where dependence on government support is not inevitable. The writer must challenge the government's self-proclaimed right to interference everywhere in the name of support.

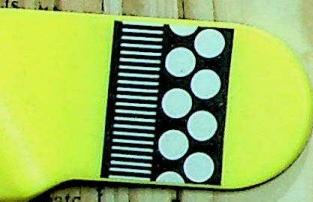
Mr Nirmal Verma asserted that at least in our country there is no inevitability about a particular direction of technological growth and the writer need not accept what is given to him. In fact, it is his function as a writer to constantly demolish the given frames and create new ones. While ideology colonises time, technology colonises space and nature. But the relationship between man and nature is not one of master and servant. There are enough elements in

contradictory processes that can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to

conscience of his times and the autonomy of ideas. A critic acts as a mediator and the Indian society and culture which can successfully face the onslaught of modern technology. The main significance of this exercise was that it provided a forum for an uninhibited and frank dialogue between authors and critics not only of different generations but also of very divergent literary and socio-political visions. That is why even if the discussion could not examine in greater depth any of the crucial literary issues taken up, the experience was like a breath of fresh air in an otherwise highly fragmented, insulated and recriminatory atmosphere currently choking the Hindi literary scene.

The discussion on criticism and politics started with a paper by a young critic, Madan Soni, who squarely blamed and castigated left-

the national perspective and national priorities. The kind of politicking that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.



Assembly Poll Outcome

Some Important Consequences

By A.S. ABRAHAM

THE assembly election results in Kerala, West Bengal, and Jammu and Kashmir reinforce the pattern of dual control that is now a predominant, if not the characteristic, feature of our democracy. Nationally, the people, as every general election has shown, prefer to vest authority in one beneficiary so comfortably, even overwhelmingly, as to ensure against any destabilisation of the kind that has been so common in the state. Except for one occasion, in 1977, that beneficiary has been the Congress, and even in 1977, the Janata won no less overwhelmingly.

In the states, however, power has more and more developed, thanks to an increasingly differentiated electorate, to strongly rooted regional parties. This is now even more the case with the retreat of the Congress from the South as the party of governance. The triumph of the CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala, by however narrow a voting margin, has reduced the Congress there to the also-ran status it already has in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

In West Bengal, the CPM-led Left Front's convincing victory makes it plain that, whatever the Congress inroads into its support base, especially in Calcutta, the CPM's grip on West Bengal is no nine-day wonder.

Expedient Switch

In Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference (NC) is as popular as ever. True, the Congress has kept its own end up, although its replacement of the BJP in Jammu the second time round makes its constituency in the state a mainly communal one, whereas the NC, by rousing the rabid Muslim United Front (MUF), has convincingly established its non-communal appeal. Dr Farooq Abdullah's victory reflects the Kashmiri people's resentment of the way the power he won legitimately in 1983 was unjustly snatched from him at the instance of the Congress, which later shrewdly put itself on the side of the angles, an expedient switch that has now paid it dividends. Nevertheless, it must bask in the NC's reflected glory.

Not all regional parties in power in the states (including parties like the Janata, claiming to be national) are so well-entrenched, with elaborate structures reaching deep down to the grassroots, as to be invulnerable to any revival of Congress influence. In fact, in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and even Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir, it is difficult to envisage the parties in office there being as effective without their present charismatic leaders. The Telugu Desam without NTR, the Janata without Mr Hegde, the AIADMK without Mr M.G. Ramachandran, despite his poor health, and the National Conference without Dr Abdullah, may not wither away, but they would find the going tough unless they were in time able to establish an alternative leadership of comparable quality.

True, the NC is a decades-old party that has put down deep roots. The AIADMK is the inheritor of a long tradition of Dravidian anti-Brahminism and anti-Sanskritisation. On the other hand, the Telugu Desam is of much more recent vintage, while the Janata is

still by and large a somewhat nondescript imitation of erstwhile Congress virtuousness. Even so, without the cement their leaders provide, they would have a harder time winning elections and otherwise putting their stamp on their states.

Not that the Congress is a well-oiled machine. The factionalism that tears its state units apart is only too evident. Its repeated postponement of the internal elections that Mr Rajiv Gandhi has promised again and again shows how reluctant it is roll back the stone for fear of all the dissentient snakes that will come hissing out. Nor is its rural presence any more impressive. It, too, lacks the means of providing alternative leaders at various levels. Even though the dissatisfaction occasioned by Mr Rajiv Gandhi's stewardship is growing, the common plaint is that there is as yet no alternative to him. But will Congress members continue to wring their hands so helplessly if he goes on losing one election after another?

Because the Congress as much as most of the opposition parties are not organisationally so secure and depend heavily on their leaders' charisma—the exception being the CPM which is well-established in West Bengal, especially in the rural areas where its extensive land reforms have secured it the enduring support of the beneficiaries—control of the states is, and will continue to be, much more keenly competitive than dominance at the Centre has so far proved to be. The situation in the states is kaleidoscopic, with shifting patterns of control. The old era, which saw the Congress dominant at once in the states and at the Centre, is gone for good. That dominance was first breached in 1967, and since then the breach has gone on widening.

Some important consequences flow from the election results. Firstly, since Mr Rajiv Gandhi is losing such grip as he had on the country and the party, his credibility in the eyes of both can only be damaged further. However this dissatisfaction translates on the ground, his present troubles are not just a bad patch but arise out of a widely perceived lack of competence, maturity and direction.

Widening Breach

Secondly, Centre-state relations will be subject to even greater strains. The duality of control as between the Centre and the states does affect the Centre insofar as the Rajya Sabha is concerned. To the extent Congress control of the Lok Sabha requires the Rajya Sabha to approve the measures it initiates, to that extent the Upper House's endorsement will be more difficult to come by since it largely comprises those elected by state legislatures, in so many of which non-Congress parties are dominant.

However, one good consequence of the emergence of regional parties is the growing decentralisation within the states they run that they have encouraged. In Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, power has been devolved to rural bodies through panchayat and other local elections. This has led to a much greater degree of popular involvement in decision-making. If the Congress wants to re-establish its primacy in these states, it will have to play the decentralisation game as well. When it was in power,

it did little or nothing to devolve authority on an elective basis.

Thirdly, perhaps the most heartening thing about the results is the repudiation of communal and sectarian politics that they signify. In Jammu and Kashmir, the MUF had made such threatening noises as to create the impression that it would become a menacingly divisive force on the strength of its brazenly communalist appeal. In fact, it has been routed. Whatever the vile propaganda it unleashed, the people of Kashmir have proved immune to it. Their verdict is a slap in the MUF's face.

In Kerala, the LDF's success is a vindication of its commitment to non-sectarian politics of the kind the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) was not prepared to forswear. The UDF image had been besmirched by its pandering to communal parties, like the two wings of the Kerala Congress, the Muslim League and the parties representing the Nair and Ezhava communities, to the point of allowing itself to become their prisoner. It must be said that the CPM did not entirely shun communal politics, but it did eventually steer clear of them.

As for West Bengal, no one can accuse the CPM or the Left Front it heads of being communal. True, on the Assam Question or the Centre's handling of the Darjeeling issue, Bengali interests have been uppermost in Left Front minds. But this is only natural and does not amount to playing communal politics.

Internal Disarray

The CPM and the left generally can only be pleased at the outcome in Kerala and West Bengal. For too long, the CPM has been confined to West Bengal and Tripura. Now, it has Kerala again. That does not mean it has broken out of its regional confines, for Kerala was in any case one of its hunting grounds. It will have to make an electoral impact in some other state of some significance before it can claim to be a truly national party with more than a mere handful of parochial strongholds. Even so, to the extent it has for the third time in a row won power in West Bengal and has come back in Kerala, it has ample reason to congratulate itself.

The left remains, on the whole, a peripheral force in the country's politics. But the CPM's rural reforms in West Bengal and Tripura, coupled with its rationalist and secularist stand on national issues, have made it the source of a political radicalism from which the country can benefit. If the Congress and some of the other opposition parties in power in the states were to try and compete with it in the enforcement of the radical measures that have transformed the West Bengal countryside, ours would be a much more prosperous and equitable society.

The Congress must ponder its future course of action even as it licks its wounds. It is on the retreat in the South, must reaffirm its hold on Maharashtra and Gujarat, and will have to muster the courage to face the electorate in Haryana. The party is in a bad way not only because of its electoral losses but also by virtue of its internal disarray and the alienation of its leader from its rank and file. If it does not bestir itself, its troubles will surely grow.

finding that, given the modest 3% of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

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the national perspective and national priorities. The kind of politicking that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Political Commentary

Shades Of The Seventies

By INDER MALHOTRA

THE uneasy relationship between the Prime Minister and the President had been New Delhi's most open secret for close to two years. It has, in fact, been written about in the print media frequently, at length and sometimes in far from savoury detail.

Each side's grievances against the other, usually attributed to sources close to them, have been clearly catalogued and are therefore well known. The crux of the President's complaint, as confirmed by his leaked letter of March 9, is that he has been denied information to which he is entitled both constitutionally and by convention, and that, as head of state, he has not been shown due respect by the head of government. The Prime Minister's side of the case, as reported, has been that Rashtrapati Bhavan leaks, not like a sieve but like aby's crib. It is, therefore, not considered a "safe" recipient of sensitive information.

Since it was no part of Mr Rajiv Gandhi's scheme of things to take Giani Zail Singh into confidence about his plans and policies on such issues as Punjab, the Prime Minister seems to have decided not to spend time calling on the President just to exchange pleasantries. If it occurred to him that this denial of even surface courtesies and failure to observe even formal proprieties could be damaging not only to a delicate relationship between the top two dignitaries of the Indian state but also to the body politic, he appears to have brushed the thought aside.

The souring relationship continued to deteriorate, as it was bound to. Came a stage when the President's foreign travels were obstructed and so were his plans to visits to states. Confidential telegrams of the foreign office, routinely read by scores of relatively minor functionaries, were withheld from Rashtrapati Bhavan. For their part the Prime Minister and his confidants continued to smart under the belief, based apparently on information received, that they were being constantly sniped at by the President and his men.

Four Factors

In spite of all this the melancholy situation did not become a live issue in the political arena as months rolled by. One famous occasion Mr Rajiv Gandhi was asked at an impromptu press conference why he was not abiding by the convention on calling on the President after a visit overseas in order to brief the head of state about its outcome. His breezy reply, to the effect that he had been breaking several other conventions also, was widely reported but did not cause even a mild flutter in the political dove-cotes.

It is only now, since Friday last, to be exact, that the issue has turned into a major and unwholesome controversy which could, unless handled with care, easily escalate and explode. Four factors seem to have fused together to bring about this state of affairs.

Firstly, the great disillusionment with Mr Rajiv Gandhi's record over

the last two years, especially within the intelligentsia and in the media, has made him vulnerable, at any rate in the eyes of his opponents and critics. What may have been ineffectual if used during the height of his popularity is now seen as an excellent stick to beat him with.

Secondly, with a string of elections either on or in the offing, the present seemed to be a propitious time firmly to put the Prime Minister in the wrong. In the election campaign in West Bengal and Kerala, the CPM has played up, in a big way, the charge that Mr Rajiv Gandhi, in his dealings with the President, has both violated the Constitution and flouted Parliament. If this does have the desired effect and Kerala, as the Congress Party's only tenuous toehold in power to the south of the Vindhya, is lost the domino effect on the Haryana elections in June and the presidential poll in July cannot possibly be avoided.

Nor is much imagination needed to realise what all this would do to the position of a leader whose party, after the historic mandate of December 1984, has lost assembly elections in Punjab, Assam and Mizoram and local ones in West Bengal and Andhra.

Wishful Thinking

That is where the third factor influencing the determination of those out to maintain the momentum of their assault on the Prime Minister comes in. Rightly or wrongly, there is an expectation in Delhi's air these days that the hitherto silent sullenness within the ranks of the Congress Parliamentary Party could turn into a revolt. This may turn out to be no more than a wishful thinking. But the hope is there. Some feel that even if an open revolt or split does not take place, enough Congress MPs might be persuaded to ditch the official Congress candidate in the secret ballot for electing the next President.

It is only fair to add that this kind of talk in the vast whispering gallery that the capital has become has been encouraged by persistent reports and rumours about the ruling establishment's plans to bypass the vice-president, Mr R. Venkataraman, and pick some other presidential candidate. Some of the names floated in this connection are so bizarre as to be beyond belief. But then, the argument runs, Giani Zail Singh's own choice by Mrs Indira Gandhi was greeted with dismay and worse, not least by many of those who are now backing him to the hilt.

Fourthly and finally, the present crisis atmosphere has been precipitated by Mr Rajiv Gandhi's own maladroit interventions on the subject of his relationship with the head of state in both Houses of Parliament which gave the President a perfect opening convincingly to contradict him flatly.

Regrettably, the Prime Minister remains a parliamentary movie. He tends to treat Parliament as a college union and concentrates all his energies on scoring petty debating points. He lacks his mother's remarkable capacity for restraint and propensity to say on tricky subjects as little as possible. She did have the occasional failing of mak-

ing assertions, such as "Sanjay was never in politics", which ran counter to all available evidence. This failing of the present Prime Minister appears to have inherited in ample measure.

It can be argued that even if Mr Rajiv Gandhi had spoken in Parliament with greater skill and finesse, the Giani might have found some other pretext to raise the issue. But that is beside the point.

There is some surprise and disappointment in the Prime Minister's camp and among vocal sections of the Congress Party that during the pernicious discussion on the issue no one has condemned the impropriety of the leakage of so privileged a document as the President's letter to the Prime Minister. The complaint would be valid in normal circumstances, but unfortunately the circumstances are not normal. Someone did make top secret official files of the Union home ministry available to a newspaper, complete with docket numbers, to show that Giani Zail Singh, as home minister, had supported, indeed sponsored, the very Postal Bill he is not objecting to as President.

The key question now is not who did what in the past—for this debate would be both endless and ugly—but where do the President, the Prime Minister, Parliament and the country go from here. They are all saddled with an issue in which questions of parliamentary privilege, constitutional proprieties, veracity of the Prime Minister's word, a palpable political struggle and freedom of the Press have got inextricably mixed up.

It is on this score that there is the greatest cause for concern, indeed foreboding. The highest national interest, to say nothing of the dignity of the offices of President and Prime Minister, demands that the current controversy be ended as quickly and gracefully as humanly possible. This is reported to be the objective also of the Prime Minister's reply to the President's letter of March 9. However, the way things are going, the controversy far from ending, could turn into a running sore.

Key Question

This is so because of the speaker's sweeping and inflexible ruling putting a blanket ban on any mention of the subject in the Lok Sabha which contrasts so sharply with the imaginative manner in which the matter has been handled by the Rajya Sabha chairman.

It is curious, to say the least, that an issue which, to the exclusion of every other, is being discussed intensely everywhere else in the country should be shut out completely in sovereign Parliament.

But that apart, sitting through the Lok Sabha proceedings these last few days has given one the ominous feeling that one is witnessing what could be the repetition of the Tel Mohan Ram fiasco that virtually disrupted a whole session of Parliament in 1973-74. The Congress Party's rhetoric, from the wings, not the stage inveighing against "rightwing reactionaries" is also reminiscent of those unhappy years.

This dismal drift can surely be checked. To allow history to repeat itself, as a combination perhaps of both farce and tragedy, would be an egregious error, not an act of statesmanship.

throw up its head in despair, finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

way various permutations

bothering to explain how the non-controversial processes can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to tickle that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Political Commentary

After The Mini-Poll, What?

By INDER MALHOTRA

IN politics and public affairs John F. Kennedy used to say success has a proud parentage but failure is always an orphan. For once he has been proved wrong. Mr Asoke Sen is not the only one to have rushed in to claim at least a part of the discredit for the Congress debacle in West Bengal during the recent three state mini poll.

Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, state Congress chief as well as the Union minister of state for commerce, has manfully accepted "full responsibility" though he has refrained from following Mr Sen's lead in resigning from the council of ministers as an act of expiation.

Whether there actually was in the Marxist bastion a Congress wave which the local party managers failed to convert into votes is of academic interest now. Even so, it would be wise to resist the temptation to assume that the huge, cheering crowds in West Bengal that greeted Mr Rajiv Gandhi—and, of course, Mr Rajesh Khanna—had consisted entirely or even largely of potential Congress voters. After all in 1982, Indira Gandhi, too, had attracted similar crowds without being able to make much difference to the voting pattern. Even in the heady days of 1971-72, the Indira wave had somehow stopped at the Bihar-Bengal border.

In the circumstances the best thing to have happened as a result of the West Bengal election from the Congress Party's point of view may be the renewed flurry in the circles that matter about the need to reinvigorate the Congress, especially to rebuild the organisation at the grassroots. But the trouble is that such talk has been heard much too often before without pious words ever being matched by recognisable deeds.

Rude Reality

Anyway, what is the point in saying, as Mr Rajiv Gandhi did to *Newsweek*, that the Congress has become "labby" while the rude reality is that it has decayed to the point of being dead for all practical purposes? A great many factors, including the steady moral degeneration of those controlling the levers of power in the party and the government, over the recent decades, have contributed to this dismal denouement. Of late, however, the party's bane seems to have been desuetude.

In the proud history of the Indian National Congress, dating back more than a century, 1986 has the dubious distinction of being the only year when not a single meeting of the AICC was held. That the AICC could not meet also during the three years between the Quit India resolution and the end of the Second World War can be no alibi for the present deliberate neglect of the most important deliberative body of the Congress. Nor is the confidence in the brave new talk of breathing a new life into the Congress enhanced by the manner in which the Congress parliamentary party is functioning, if that indeed be the right word to use.

The Congress, however, is not the only party to be discomfited by the elections. Almost all other parties, except the CPM and the newly

formed Bahujan Samaj Party, formerly known enigmatically as DS-4 have reason to be concerned though the Congress Party's dismay is bound to be the greatest—in direct proportion to its setbacks and future stakes.

For the BJP to have regained only two assembly seats in its erstwhile stronghold of Jammu, where it was routed in 1983, can only be cold comfort. It may derive a little more satisfaction from the over one million votes it and the "Hindu Munnani" together have polled in Kerala though the BJP's ambition to enter the assembly at Trivandrum remains unfulfilled. But overall, the BJP has done as poorly as the Janata and the Lok Dal, particularly in the by elections in the key state of UP.

Kashipur, where Mr Akbar Ahmed "Dumpy" of the Sanjay Vichar Manch, backed by all major opposition parties, humiliated the Congress, is a case apart. Elsewhere the Janata, BJP and Lok Dal have to their mortification, all been supplaned by the new party of the Harijans and the backward classes, the BSP. The BSP's capacity to act as a "banana peel" and trip candidates it does not like had been demonstrated even earlier.

reversed the fortunes of the rival fronts.

With a strength of 35 in a ruling coalition of 75, the CPM would have had great difficulty in keeping its traditionally sensitive and slippery allies in line even at the best of times. But with Mr E.K. Nayanar once again installed on the chief minister's *gaddi* the times cannot be said to be of the best. His ineptitude was among the principal factors that enabled Mr Karunakaran to topple the Marxist led ministry in 1981. To expect a more skilled performance from Mr Nayanar now would be a triumph of hope over experience.

Another puzzling aspect of the CPM's decision in favour of Mr Nayanar is that throughout the election campaign the party had projected as the potential chief minister Mrs K. Gowri Amma, a tactic which won it many wavering Ezhava voters in the closely contested southern districts.

Evidently, the personal preference of Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad, at 82 still the Marxists' source of our spiritual independence, '60s, days of School of

Kashmir has once again lived up to its nationalist and secular reputation. The powerful challenge mounted by Muslim fundamentalist and separatist forces has been defeated by the national Conference-Congress alliance. But it can be no longer ignored that the Muslim United Front's defeat has not been as decisive as had appeared in the first flush of election results. The last election result, announced only on Sunday, underscores the point. In Bijwada, the National Conference candidate has scraped through, defeating his MUF rival with a majority of exactly a hundred votes. Ironically, in almost all constituencies the margins of Congress' National Conference victories are smaller than they were when the main parties instead of cooperating were confronting each other.

Puzzling Aspect

The fundamentalist mobilisation during the poll will not easily disappear. The vast outpouring of votes during the election campaign is being compounded by calls for a return to the demand for an "Hindu struggle". A hue and cry is being raised also against the alleged gonging of the poll.

To combat and contain all that is visible at present, it is enough that Mr Rajiv Gandhi, Dr Farooq Abdullah, persons in both their parties which are from being the case so far

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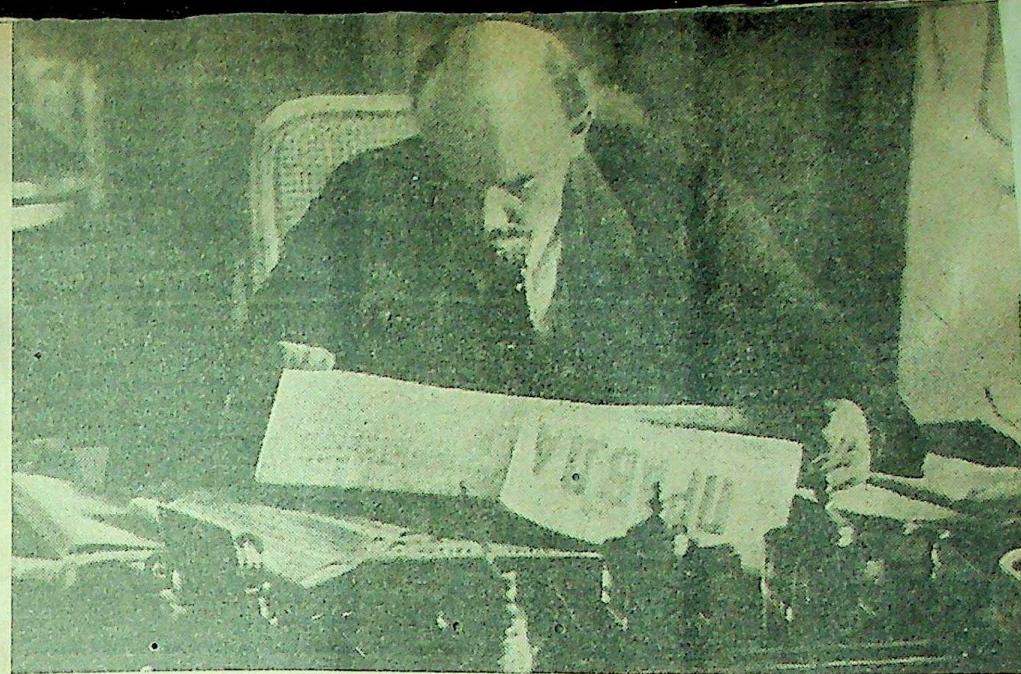
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A Mosaic Reality

tive perceptions, embellished by whatever they could additionally gather in the rough and tumble of daily combat. Lenin's scholarly output too was, almost exclusively, the by-product of intra-party ideological polemics.

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, the opus which provides the inspiration for the present volume, was Lenin's attempt to carry forward Marx's grand schemata of capitalist development to its logical culmination. Monopoly capital connotes the advanced stage of capitalist development in one country; the organic need to sustain themselves drives the capitalists into swallowing their rivals. Capitalist competition leads to the law of the jungle, the weaker adversaries are gobbled up by the stronger ones, capital is gradually monopolised. But, even after monopolisation, the threat of competition persists, from monopoly combines of another country backed to the tilt by that country's government. So the frenzy of monopoly capital is not yet exhausted.

The striving for "economic territory" follows from the urge to beat down one's rivals on the global scale: the annexed territory provides a cheap source of raw material and labour, a ready receptacle for commodities produced in the home country as well as a dumping ground for its "excess" capital. Imperialist wars, in Lenin's lexicon, are fought between capitalist systems for the consummation of aims such as these: no holds are barred in these wars, for the empire I build not only assures my own hegemony.

Lenin And Imperialism: An Appraisal Of Theories And Contemporary Reality: Edited By Prabhat Patnaik (Orient Longman, Rs. 175, 1986)

mon, it also endangers my neighbour's hegemony, which is the core of the monopolist's ethos.

Monopoly control over the means of production, monopoly control over money and finance, and monopoly control over territory epitomise the arrival of the imperial dawn. Lenin described this as the "mosaic reality". At any given moment, in different parts of the world, there could be subsidiary realities such as single country-based monopoly capitalism, monopoly interspersed with competi-

tive endeavour, or vast stretches still held in thrall by traces of feudalism or even pre-feudalism.

They do not however reduce the overriding significance of the "mosaic reality", to which the other realities gravitate. Imperialism, in Lenin's taxonomy, is the state's capitalist system is impelled towards once it has passed the phase of monopolisation; war between competing imperialisms is the final enactment of this stupendous drama.

In the more than 60 years since Lenin formulated his thesis, commentaries and counter-commentaries, annotations and counter-annotations, caveats and counter-caveats have proliferated around its central theme. There have been much polemics for polemics' sake, but fresh theories have also evolved in the light of newly emerging realities. Even epistemology has undergone transformation over the decades, calling for new ways of looking at old facts.

There is thus a need to engage in a continuous review of Lenin's theory of imperialism, the premises on which it was built, the hypotheses it had sought to prove, and the umpteen corollaries drawn, over the years, from these hypotheses. At the other end, it is equally necessary to take a hard look at the nature of changing global reality, with all its subsidiary manifestations, in a world from which Lenin had departed more than six decades ago.

The collection edited by Prabhat Patnaik performs both tasks with imagination and competence. Divided into five broad sections

Bagchi, Amit Bhaduri, C. P. Chandrasekhar, Prabhat Patnaik and Amal Sanyal. Their papers throw as much light on the secular relevance of Lenin's theory of imperialism as on the ingredients of contemporary reality as reflected in the vicissitudes and comebacks marking the progress of capitalism on the global stage in recent times.

Two papers, by Krishna Bharadwaj and Utsa Patnaik respectively, dissect, with controlled dispassion, some of the far cut theories concerning "unequal exchange" between advanced capitalist and under-developed quasi-feudal quasi-colonial economies. These theories, despite their apparent reasonableness, have frighteningly nihilist implications: basing themselves on shaky analogies and impressionistic logic, they end up by charging the working class in the countries of capitalism with a part of the responsibility for global exploitation. Bharadwaj and Patnaik perform a neat demolition job by laying bare the false analytical steps which vitiate such formulations.

The general message that comes through confirms the relevance of Lenin's development of Marxist theory by positing social relations on an international scale. As Mr. Bagchi hints in his paper, it may indeed be fruitful to read Lenin on imperialism in conjunction with his theory of national self-determination. Perhaps equally relevant would be to consider Lenin's construct along with what Rosa Luxemburg states, in her slightly quixotic, individual manner, on the organic necessity of the capitalist system to embark in its quest for the realisation of surplus, on colonial and imperial exploitation.

On none of these issues are debates and controversies likely to experience any sudden death; to nurture any contrary expectation would be anti-science. The significance of the present collection of papers lies in their analytical rigour, which has raised the level of polemics to a remarkably high plane. The collection, besides whips us into an awareness of the stupendous stature of truly great men; even as they ushered in new systems of human civilization they also constructed equally impressive structures of thought and philosophy to provide the moral scaffolding for the new civilization.

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The way various permutations

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Passions of the mind

Both psychoanalysts of note and candidly obsessed with the erotic element, the authors recount different periods and cultures, applying to them the modern probes of psychoanalysis in order to heighten our awareness of the degrees to which love may be ecstatic, excruciating, innocent, lustful, guilt-ridden...

by Anna Khanna

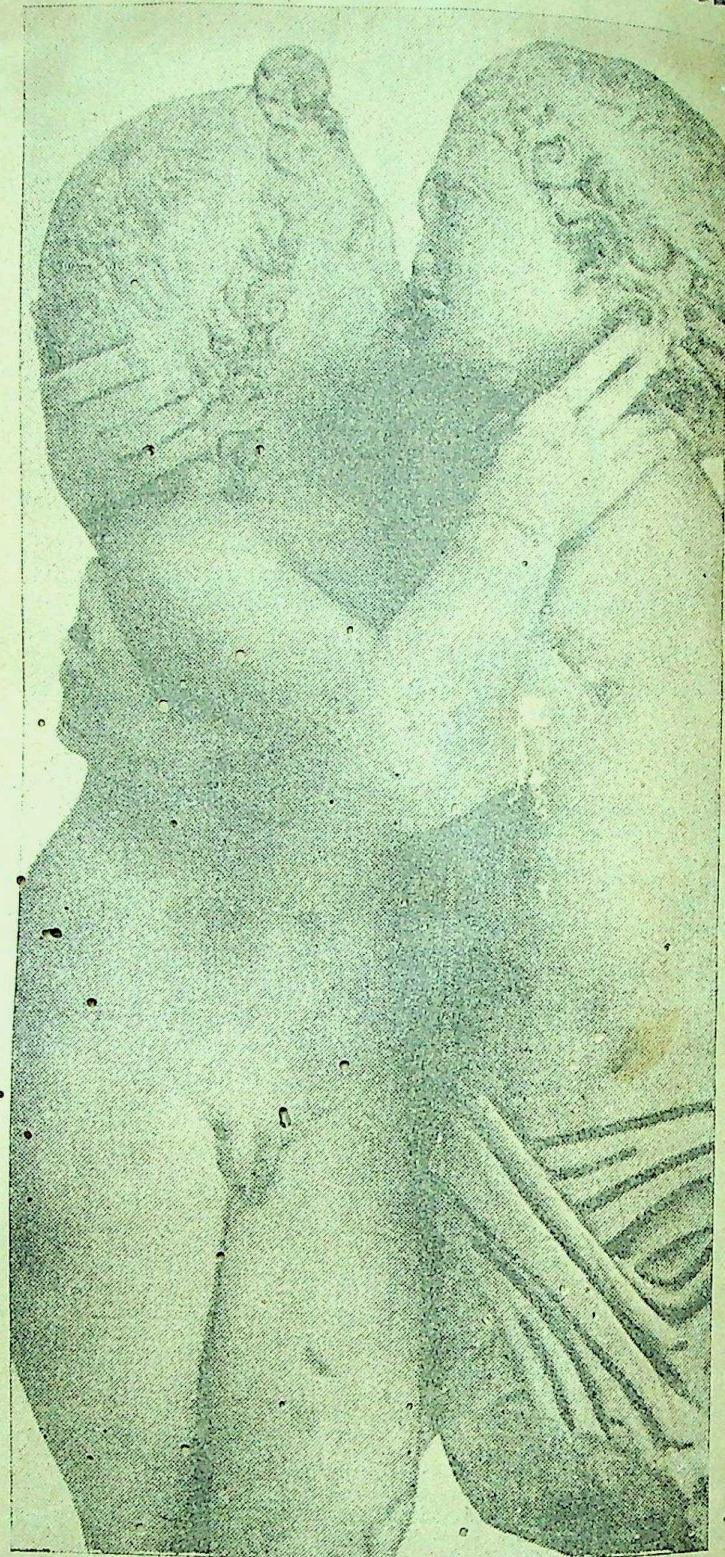
SPIRITUALISTS and ascetics to the contrary, there can be no love without sex, that is, without its real or imagined or sometimes unconscious enactment in the sexual embrace of two persons." So say Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross in a great diversity of ways in their book, *Tales of Love, Sex and Danger*.

Both psychoanalysts of note and candidly and, I think, happily obsessed with the erotic element in human passions, they recount different periods and cultures, applying to them the modern probes of psychoanalysis in order to heighten our awareness and understanding of the degrees to which love may be ecstatic, excruciating, innocent, lustful, guilt-ridden, unrequited, ennobling, degrading and many other things to boot.

Leaning heavily on Freud and Nabokov, but without actually making use of classic case histories, they delve into the psychic minutiae of how any one, or any combination of these aspects may add up to passion, bliss, despair and even death. Religion—Hindu, Christian, Islamic, ancient Greek—is given an important place both as a framework for the stories and as an explanatory factor in love's greatest blight: guilt. Inhibition and, more often, its absence are given prominent treatment in the cross-cultural matrix.

Fortunately, the initial contention notwithstanding, the text is not boringly overburdened with clinical descriptions of the act of coitus, and the frequent titillation of the senses, which might be expected from such a book, is achieved more by obliquely evocative literary references than by blatant statements of fact.

The most enjoyable parts of the book are those which actually piece together famous love stories: Romeo and Juliet, Sohni and Mahinwai, Heer and Ranjha, Laila and Majnun, Radha and Krishna, Tristan and Isolde, Vis and Raman, Hamlet, Phaedra and, of course, the inevitable Oedipus. The dramatic tensions of separation and lodging, and the dangers



EARTHY DESIRES : Cupid, the Roman god of love, with the mortal Psyche.

Tales Of Love, Sex And Danger : By Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross (OUP, 1986, Rs 140)

of clandestine meetings are poignantly brought out.

Nevertheless, one's enjoyment of the vivid narration of these well-chosen tales is often obtruded upon by the rather heavily psychoanalytical explanations which the authors project upon stories which, left to themselves, would in any case go straight to the heart.

That man and woman were one in the ancient mists of time, and were split into two so that procreation might take place is one

of the reasons offered us by ancient myths on human cravings for the opposite sex. This notion is interestingly fleshed out in a chapter called "The Phenomenology of Passionate Love". This initial oneness, then a physical splitting into male and female, followed by copulation and the siring of the human race is shown to be common to several ancient Indian myths such as those of Purusha, Shiva, Manu (in this case twins) and the equally ancient Persian story of Mashya and

Nuclear Weapons In Asia

Consequences For India

By K. SUBRAHMANYAM

WITH Pakistan joining the nuclear club, Asia has a fifth nuclear weapons power, the others being the USSR, China, the USA and Israel. And many Asian nations are involved in providing the infrastructure for nuclear powers. In this article I propose to outline briefly how extensively and intensively nuclear weapons and the nuclear war fighting infrastructure have spread over the Asian continent and its implications for India.

The bulk of the 1398 Soviet ICBMs and nearly 170 medium range and intermediate range missiles are believed to be deployed in the Asian part of the Soviet Union. Some 385 submarine-borne strategic missiles are also said to be allotted to the Far Eastern fleet. Besides these, the Siberian, the Far East, the central Asian and the trans-Baikal military districts have short-range nuclear missiles, nuclear artillery and nuclear capable aircraft. Some western experts maintain that nuclear capable long-range anti-submarine aircraft operate from the Aden international airport and the Al Anad airbase in South Yemen. The Soviet navy has established major naval bases in Camranh bay and Danang in Vietnam. Some of the naval vessels and the TU-16 aircraft operating from these bases are nuclear capable. Some frog missiles are also believed to be deployed in Mongolia.

The Chinese were reported to deploy in 1986 six ICBMs, around 60 intermediate range nuclear weapons and 50 medium-range nuclear weapons on the mainland, including some in outer Tibet. In addition, China has two nuclear missile submarines and is believed to be planning to build at least four more. China has conducted large-scale army exercises with tactical nuclear weapons and should be deploying them with its forces.

Open Secret

The United States deploys its nuclear weapon carriers, nuclear weapons and nuclear war fighting infrastructural facilities in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, Japan, Oman, the Philippines, South Korea and Turkey. Diego Garcia has been authorised to have wartime deployment of nuclear depth bombs to support P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft operations. Diego Garcia also supports the presence of a carrier battle group which invariably has nuclear weapons on board. Diego Garcia also has a space tracking station, a satellite communication station, and a Navstar tracking and control ground antenna and passive monitoring station. The last system helps to improve the guidance and accuracy of missiles.

The United States maintains in Japan the most extensive forward nuclear infrastructure in the Pacific region; the Kadena air base on Okinawa houses strategic tankers, reconnaissance aircraft and communications network to support nuclear operations. There are eight other nuclear communications stations in Japan. Nuclear capable forces such as marine corps artillery aviation units, P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft and the carrier Midway are stationed in Japan. Misawa airbase is reported to be pre-

pared to receive nuclear depth bombs in wartime.

The Masirah island in Oman is used as a periodic staging post for nuclear capable American P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft. Nuclear weapons are reported to be no longer permanently stored in the Philippines although stand-by storage is available. Subic Bay is the largest US overseas naval installation being the headquarters of the Seventh Fleet with carrier task force which normally has nuclear weapons on board. The Clark Air Force base has emergency action facility to operate nuclear capable aircraft and receive nuclear orders.

US forces in South Korea are believed to deploy 151 nuclear warheads. US and South Korean forces are integrated in terms of planning and operation involving nuclear weapons. Turkey as a member of the NATO has 489 nuclear weapons deployed on its territory.

Israel is reported to have over 200 nuclear weapons. This was an open secret for well over a decade. While generating signals continuously about its nuclear prowess Israel officially denies that it has nuclear weapons. Pakistan has copied the Israeli strategy of ambiguity.

Khan's Interview

Now Pakistan joins the list of nations in Asia with nuclear weapons. Even earlier the US P-3 anti-submarine warfare aircraft, the standard equipment of which is a nuclear depth charge, has been using landing facilities at the Mauripur airfield.

It is against this background one has to consider various proposals for a nuclear weapons free zones. Often these proposals are put forward as a smokescreen to cover nuclear weapons acquisition. Mr Zhou En-lai put forward an Asian pacific nuclear weapons free zone proposal in 1963 even as China was racing ahead to acquire nuclear weapons capability. The Israelis with a nuclear arsenal of 200 weapons have proposed a Middle East nuclear weapons free zone. Pakistan too has been pressing its South Asian nuclear weapons free zone ever since it started its quest for nuclear weapons.

Pakistan argues that China is a South Asian power. Geographically this is correct since the latitude touching the north of Jammu and Kashmir and North-West Frontier Province will have to its south more than 50 per cent of China. The US too recognised China's legitimate interest in South Asia in the Shanghai communiqué. Then how can one have a realistic South Asian nuclear free zone without China's participation? What kind of nuclear weapons free zone will it be if US, Soviet and Chinese nuclear capable ships can sail just twelve miles off our coast and nuclear capable planes can use the facilities in the area?

The purpose of Pakistan nuclear weapons free zone proposal is to disarm India vis-a-vis China. In his interview on January 28, Dr A.Q. Khan said that China as a big country was justified in possessing nuclear weapons. But, according to him, India, which has three-fourths of China's population, should be equated to Pakistan which has one-

eighth India's population and should foreswear the weapons. It is not surprising that Dr Khan puts forward this argument. What is unfortunate is that there are a number of people in this country for whom sovereignty of India means so little they are ready to follow the example of our princes of eighteenth and nineteenth century who enthusiastically accepted Lord Wellesley's subsidiary alliance system and voluntarily brought India under foreign hegemony.

Some others argue that India's advocacy of nuclear disarmament is not consistent with India exercising nuclear option. This is like arguing that those who consider murder as a crime have no right of self-defence. Gorbachov proposes total elimination of nuclear weapons yet continues to build nuclear weapons and has resumed nuclear weapon tests. Those who are preoccupied about our sin of going nuclear when Asia is being nuclearised represent the traditional view of our ancestors who could not care less if India came under the British crown so long as their own caste and religious purity and sectarian interests were safeguarded. That India has been in the forefront of nuclear disarmament efforts is a convenient and self-satisfying myth. In reality the rest of the world, particularly the West, totally ignores all our efforts in the UN and the western literature on arms control and disarmament has not by and large taken note of our resolutions and so-called initiatives.

The limited credibility India commands is because of our Pokhran test of 1974. Only the initiatives and proposals of nuclear weapon powers command attention in the councils of major powers. If India were to continue to abstain from nuclear weapon option even after Pakistan has gone nuclear then the rest of South Asia, China, the US and the USSR are bound to re-evaluate their attitude towards India to our disadvantage and peril.

Logical Conclusion

All nations will draw the logical conclusion that India has no will to act in the nuclear field. It was such an image that led General Ayub Khan to launch 'Operation Gibraltar' in 1965 and the Chinese to support the Naga and Mizo insurgents in the sixties and seventies. Other small neighbours of South Asia will look to a nuclear Pakistan tacitly allied to China and the US for leadership. Even the USSR will consider India more of a liability than a partner and will develop its policy towards Pakistan accordingly. The US will be confirmed in the view it held in the fifties and sixties that the effective power between Israel and Vietnam was Pakistan.

Israel and Pakistan have proved that costs of going nuclear are affordable even by small nations. China has proved that when a nation has the nuclear shield it can afford to go slow on its modernisation of conventional weapons which is relatively a far more costly. For China, France, Israel and Pakistan the nuclear effort has involved only 10 to 15 per cent of the defence effort.

throw up his hands in despair on finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

not bothering to explain how the contradictory processes can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to take the national perspective.

Political Commentary

Gathering Clouds In Delhi

By INDER MALHOTRA

UNSEASONAL dark clouds over New Delhi's horizon at the start of the week were aptly symbolic of the capital's murky political scene which threatens to get murkier. The painful and potentially explosive controversy over the estrangement between the Prime Minister and the President will not go away, notwithstanding stern rulings by the Chair in both Houses of Parliament or Mr Kamalapati Tripathi's mediatory exertions.

On the contrary PTI's terse report from Calcutta on Friday, repudiating all suggestions that Mr Rajiv Gandhi would be seeking a meeting with Giani Zail Singh, and the Prime Minister's own remarks at Sriharikota point to an accentuation of the conflict.

A spectacular showing by the Congress in the state assembly elections in West Bengal, Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir could have taken the heat off the Prime Minister, virtually the party's sole campaigner in all three states. But he has been denied this comfort to put it no more strongly than that.

Big Blow

Thanks to the impressive victory in Jammu and Kashmir of the National Conference-Congress combination, a complete disaster has surely been averted. But the loss to the Congress of Kerala, its last toehold in power to the south of the Vindhyas, is a big blow. Even more damaging may be the drubbing that a relatively enfeebled CPM has given Congress in West Bengal. This is so because here, more than in any other state, Mr Rajiv Gandhi had staked his personal prestige on the poll's outcome.

In any case, irrespective of the fall out of the elections, the President's leaked letter cannot be wished out of existence any more than the wheel can be disinvested word needs to be said about its devastating contents, however.

A day after the *Indian Express* published what was purported to be the letter's text, *The Hindu* reported that an important, indeed operative, sentence had been left out of the *Express* despatch. And, according to *The Hindu* in this sentence the President had asked the Prime Minister to share the contents of the letter with Parliament.

As it turns out the sentence highlighted in *The Hindu* did not form part of the communication received by the Prime Minister. And as if this were not intriguing enough, there is said to be some discrepancy also between the letter received by the Prime Minister and the version published in the *Express* on March 13. This discrepancy relates reportedly to only a few words which find place in the newspaper's version but not in the letter proper.

The only rational explanation of this bizarre situation can be that the draft of the President's letter, evidently prepared with extraordinary care and skill, went through numerous revisions and deletions. Possibly the version that the *Express* obtained, or was given, went through a further chance before it was actually sent to the Prime Minister. This could have happened by default or design. But whoever persuaded *The Hindu* after the publication of the *Express* story to rely on an earlier and evidently discarded draft, could not have done

so in a fit of absentmindedness.

All this, combined with the apparent ease with which the Union home ministry's top secret files on the Postal Bill during the days when Giani Zail Singh was home minister and a supporter of the measure he now opposes could find their way into print, only underscores the cynicism with which the game of the calculated leak is being played. Add to this the publication of purported excerpts from the "supersecret" Thakkar commission's report and the hypocrisy of tearshedding over the leakage of privileged correspondence becomes evident.

Nor is this the end of the overlapping between the leakage of official secrets and the current political battles in the capital in which Mr V.P. Singh is now clearly enmeshed.

There is no doubt that the CBI's proceedings under the Official Secrets Act against Mr S. Gurumurthy, advisor to the *Indian Express* and the author of a series of accusatory articles against Reliance in it, were launched way back in December. It is also true that these articles quoted extensively from the files of the director general of technical development (DGTD) claimed by the government to be secret. But it was only after the publication of the President's letter in the *Express* that he, along with his Bombay-based partner, Mr Jankiraman, was arrested after the offices and residences of both, in Madras and Bombay, were raided and searched. To cap it all, a raid was conducted also at the residence of Mr R.N. Goenka, the chairman of the Express group, in New Delhi.

This does not prove that the raids were an act of vindictiveness or intimidation, triggered by the publication of the inconvenient letter. Their timing, however embarrassing, could have been fortuitous. But such has been the erosion of the government's credibility that many if not most, are prepared to believe the worst about its intentions, motives and actions.

Official Secrets

Even those inclined to give it the benefit of the doubt find themselves dismayed by the somewhat sensational court proceedings concerning Mr Gurumurthy and the avalanche of reports, both locally and from the U.S., which suggest that there is more to the case than meets the eye or hits the ear.

The reports are contradictory, often incomplete and sometimes incomprehensible. It is difficult to sift the grain from the chaff and the fact from fiction. Even so, from the welter of confusion two facts have begun to emerge.

First, for all its briskness, the CBI has been curiously coy about disclosing the list of documents it has seized as a result of its searches in Delhi, Bombay and Madras. On the other hand, the word is going round freely in Parliament's lobbies that something resembling a "hand-corrected draft" of the leaked letter of the President has been "recovered".

Secondly, there can be little doubt about a concerted attempt to establish a link between Mr Gurumurthy on the one hand and on the other Mr Bhure Lal and Mr Vinod Pande two of Mr V.P. Singh's

closest confidants in his days as finance minister and the principal implementors of his policy of cracking down on the violators of FERA and other economic laws.

It is being hinted that Mr Gurumurthy took a hand in the hiring by Mr Bhure Lal on behalf of the directorate of enforcement in the finance ministry of the US detective agency, Fairfax, to investigate the holdings in the Swiss banks or elsewhere of Indians, resident and non-resident, including near and dear ones of those at the very top. Questions are being asked whether Mr V.P. Singh approved the unusual step of hiring a foreign detective agency in consultation with the cabinet or at least the Prime Minister. The shunting off of Mr Bhure Lal from the enforcement directorate's stewardship to the department of currency and coinage speaks for itself. So does the transfer of the enforcement directorate from under the control of Mr Vinod Pande, as revenue secretary, to the department of economic affairs headed by Mr S. Venkataraman.

Critical Times

It is against this dismal backdrop that allegations about the Rashtrapati Bhavan being under surveillance have appeared in print for the first time though they have been bandied about in private conversations for very long. The government has denied the press report to this effect and called it "mischievous". But the *Indian Express*, which published it, has repeated the charge equally vehemently.

This particular dispute may never be resolved satisfactorily. But it once again raises the extremely pertinent question of the role of intelligence agencies and their possible misuse by the government of the day, sometimes with the willing cooperation of overzealous functionaries of these agencies. The damage done on this score in the Indira era, especially during the emergency, was never fully undone. Must the country be forced to court the same misfortune a second time?

In an eye-opening article on the censorship of mail, Mr V.E. Arunachalam, a retired member of the P and T board, has pitilessly exposed the present excitement over the Postal Bill to be a "charade", indeed a waste of time. He has pointed out that since as far back as the fifties the intelligence bureau has been opening, censoring and even suppressing mail without any legal authority whatsoever and would doubtless go on doing so. He adds that postal authorities have been routinely acquiescing in this nefarious activity.

The country is doubtless passing through critical times and the intelligence agencies are working under great strain. Mr Stimson's doctrine that gentlemen must never read other people's mail can not be followed under existing Indian conditions. But the necessary censorship of mail is one thing and utter lawlessness on part of the IB quite another. Unless the public and Parliament can compel the IB—and the same goes for other spying outfits—to be accountable, we might be inviting a disaster far bigger than the one the IB is supposed to save us from.

throw up his hands in despair, finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

not bothering to explain how the national perspective and national priorities can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to do the national perspective.

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BOOKS

Freedom struggle in the south

THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT, by P. Ramamurti, Orient Longman, Madras, Rs. 80.

Living in Madras, one cannot fail to hear the repeated grousing that most historical writing in India tends to have its gravity centered in the North. Such truth as there may be in this protest is not wholly the responsibility of chauvinists prejudiced against the South. It is only recently that work of quality, utilising the latest methods and techniques, on the past of the peninsula has been undertaken, thereby supplying enough substance to be integrated into the general history of India; and even in this, studies of the recent past lag behind those of other periods. The problem is aggravated by the fact that many of these studies are the work of scholars of other countries, with their own blind or insidious approaches to colonialism.

It is in this context that Mr. P. Ramamurti's book attains significance and Orient Longman deserve our thanks for publishing this English version of a longer Tamil book which has already had a wide circulation. The author is not an academic scholar; but he has been a participant for over 60 years in the politics of India as a whole and of the Southern region in particular, and he writes with first-hand knowledge of events. Many eye-witness accounts make this book a very readable one. But there is more to it than that. Mr. Ramamurti has a sharply defined ideology and he places other ideologies in their historical framework. He is an intellectual iconoclast who does not mince his words. One does not have to agree with his views

at every point; but one cannot run away from the facts and arguments which he places before us. If this little book encourages serious students to approach the history of these years with a well-thought-out framework and to accept the conclusions which the evidence forces us to reach, then Mr. Ramamurti's purpose (as I see it) would have been served.

He begins with a short account of the exploitative nature of British colonialism. There is nothing generally to quarrel with here, even if some details can be disputed. He then goes on to remind us that the Justice Party was never really concerned with social reforms or the weakening of the caste system. It was from the start a loyalist party of zamindars, landlords and successful businessmen, with the distinction of being the only political party in India not to have condemned the massacre in Amritsar. Thereafter till 1947, it consistently supported the British Government, doing as it was told and enjoying no popular support. Rama-swami Naicker, more concerned than any leader of the Justice party with the subordinate social status of the non-Brahmins, was a Congressman who combined his self-respect movement with demands for the expulsion of the British and steps towards socialism. It was only in the late Thirties that he abandoned his political commitment and economic radicalism and joined the Justice Party.

Mr. Ramamurti is critical of Gandhiji's political leadership and contends that the Mahatma fought only for the short-term economic interests of the budding capitalist class in India. This might sound like blasphemy.

So Mr. Ramamurti in a short span reminds us of much we have forgotten and presents us with a stack of ideas which, if even by rousing disagreement, offer many points of departure.

S. Gopal

Bad Accidents

PRACTICE OF MOTOR ACCIDENT IN INDIA: By M. B. Majumdar, N. M. Tripathi, Ltd. Rs. 150.

Vehicles Act in Chapters VII A and VIII provisions relating to Motor Accident common knowledge that the large number of vehicles on the road has contributed to disability of pedestrians and other third travelling in the vehicle causing the accident cover such liabilities to the persons concerned or their heirs that it is now cover such risks by insurance. Such on the increase, Parliament felt the need tribunals so that a speedy remedy is the concerned parties. Even in the wake of the cases take ultimately a decade book is a commentary on the providing to motor accident claims. The author capacity as a District Judge dealt with such commentary is a useful one and has dealt elaborately.

refers to the qualifications of the persons to these Tribunals as set out in Section being considered as Courts or personal appeals against their "awards" and ion. The matters entrusted to these tri- taken out of the jurisdiction of the civil

examines what an accident is. The vehicle under the definition of motor vehicle is in the light of cases decided in India. The claims relate to what arises out of this aspect is then dealt with. delineates the procedure in the matter applications by those who can apply, the impleaded, the contents of these applications to be made. S.92 A provides for no fault thereby the fixed compensation it is unnecessary to establish negligence of the vehicle causing the accident. As fixed in the provision shows is evaluated at Rs. 15,000 and disability. There is difference of opinion as to applications can be combined in a

general application or whether such applications have to be separately made. There is a shorter period of limitation prescribed for applications to the Tribunal which have however a power to condone the delay. There is an elaborate discussion about the awards, their contents, the onus on the claimant to prove negligence, the vicarious liability of the owner. Except where the doctrine of *re ipsa loquitur* is applied, the rural pedestrian, mostly illiterate or ill-informed, is under a great handicap. Though the Supreme Court has cautioned the Tribunals against their being too niggardly in awarding compensation, Parliament has not accepted the Law Commission's report of a more respectable amount as fixed compensation under S.92 A. Our politician's professions of sympathy for the poor are yet to percolate to the rural poor and illiterate pedestrians involved in an accident. The various defences to such claims as put forward in the decided cases are analysed and brought out under various heads. The principles laid down in Nance's case (1951 A.C. 601) in determining the compensation are applied in India and the author refers to them. There is a catalogue of cases decided by various High Courts in fixing the compensation. Just as the principle of equity varied with the Chancellor's foot, the compensation fixed has, it would be seen, varied with the outlook of those deciding such cases in the High Courts.

The procedure and powers of the Tribunals are then set out in the background of decided cases. As pointed out by Lord Goddard in R. v. Brighton Rent Tribunal in 1950 the procedure of these Tribunals are intended to be the formed. Krishna Iyer has also laid down in Prabhakara Rao's case (AIR 1976 SC 1803) that Tribunals have to adopt a less formal and more flexible process. This aspect has to be kept in mind by the deciding authorities.

The Appendices contain the Rules framed by the several States. Some of the States have so far not framed the rules and left it to the Tribunals to do as best as they can.

The book is on the whole a lucid commentary and would be found useful by those who have to deal with such cases.

V. Sethuraman

ess system. The author is not against or sympathetic for anyone concerned, which marks this work as a pure work of art. The character of Saudamini is delicately drawn, she goes to Vrindavan, not as a young widow, which she really is, but as one, who out of her own volition, seeks this adventure.

throw up his hands in despair, finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

not bothering to explain how the contradictions processes can be the national perspective and national priorities. The kind of policies they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to tickling that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

in ageless and multi-dimensional all boundaries, that to criticise him. He broadened the Indian effecting the political mobilisation; but he roused them to revolt appeal to their economic interlaid enemy of the class war. had duties rather than the poor demanded from the rich that they is trustees of their wealth and benefit of the less fortunate. To the living peasantry Gandhiji offered, her wage or the promise of a large produce and the profits, but what id, in the political context, as the constructive programme. It was a movement which Gandhiji organised; and the stupendous quality of that he succeeded in getting the more their own economic wretched campaign.

(This edition at least) Mr. Ramamurti elaborates his views on Nehru to a detailed analysis of de-colonialisation. Given his standpoint, he is active of the achievements of the in Madras from 1937 to 1939. But apters, based on his knowledge of the events and of the literature, are movement. He has no use for Brahminism which has always been a powerful weapon of the ruling classes to oppress and unprivileged sections of society. Caste is a much wider issue and when it deteriorates into its purpose and sting. Process, as Mr. Ramamurti shows, is past in order to promote regional study is always an incomplete use that each generation puts new in the light of its own concerns. Fresh answers do not justify evidence in order to reach conclusions.

So Mr. Ramamurti in a short span reminds us of much we have forgotten and presents us with a stack of ideas which, if even by rousing disagreement, offer many points of departure.

S. Gopal

dence

the problem from within. She is engulfed atmosphere and she, who had the initial challenge the out-dated values by falling a Christian, is obsessed by doubts course of action and seeks salvation. In sin is again the story of a brahmin becomes a prostitute as the only solution. Pitambar Mahajan, who belongs to a wishes to marry her, as he is in desperate child to continue his name. Damayanti, widow agrees to sleep with him for refuses to become his wife on account of of his caste. Her caste-ego leads her to level that she gets herself aborted to caste pollution. Pitambar desperately und, where the unborn child is buried to the scion of his lineage. And what sin? The reader can draw his own conclusions.

Indira Parthasarathy

AN'S GUIDE TO COMPUTERS: By T. C. Anil, published by Sarla Devi Jain for Nabi Publications, Box No. 37, New Delhi-110001. Rs. 22.

It has been made by the publisher to computers, right from tracing the history over the past forty years to its present and likely future trend to a layman with par-

e abrupt jumps while explaining the programming languages which, I am afraid, a layman may find it difficult to understand.

The exhaustive compilation of computer glossary and the latest policy on computer software are the plus points of this book.

K. Panchanathan

The Problems Of Transition

Maintaining The Law

By K.C. KHANNA

AS the nation recovers slowly from the trauma of Mrs Indira Gandhi's dastardly assassination, it will be coming to grips with the problems of transition to the post-Indira era. Like her father, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru, she embodied the hopes and fears of the Indian people but in her time both had multiplied manifold. Her very success in steering the country round the obstacles to its unity, prosperity and progress accentuated caste, class and regional conflicts and often brought social tensions to the boil. But she held the ring by sheer force of her personality. She believed in strong centralised authority; indeed, she was accused of concentrating all powers of the government—and in the party, for that matter—in her own hands. Perhaps she overdid it. But then it must be recognised that without asserting her pre-eminence over warring groups and individuals, she could not have held things together.

Inevitably, all this will have to change. In every mature democracy institutions are more important than the man or woman at the helm. This is particularly so in a federal set-up. In its formative years, the country was lucky enough to be guided by two towering leaders. They were needed to build the system on sure foundations. Thirty-seven years on, this system is bound to assert itself. In any case, every great leader has his or her own style of functioning which cannot possibly be imitated.

Lasting Credit

It is to Mrs Gandhi's lasting credit that during the last five years she did all she could to make her countrymen aware of the external and internal threats to the nation's integrity. Her own brutal murder, in a way, vindicated her worst forebodings. The wave of anger and revulsion that it has generated in the capital and a hundred other cities is unprecedented. For a moment it seems to have obliterated perspectives. But it must and will pass. The overwhelming majority of our people are law-abiding and tolerant—almost to a fault. And the Indian state, though caught unawares by the foul deed of two faithless men, is not so weak as to be unable to cope with an emotional upheaval of even this magnitude.

Nothing illustrates the inherent strength of the Indian polity in the face of such national emergencies as the prompt and unanimous support accorded by the leaders of all the

major opposition parties to the young Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, in his efforts to restore order in the capital and the country. None thought of taking partisan advantage of his fledge-taking government's troubles. Indeed, the opposition leaders met him a second time to urge "effective use of the army".

The failure of leadership has been confined mainly to the Sant-politicians of the Sikh community and a large section of the police officers corps, particularly in Delhi. But even here it would be wrong to generalise. If Maharashtra has been relatively calm, it is at least partly because the head priests of practically every gurudwara in the state, including Nanded and Manmad, lost no time in convening meetings to condemn the heinous crime.

Immediate Threat

Ordinary Sikhs in the state, particularly in the rural areas where they are in a majority, have maintained the sturdy tradition of good-neighbourly relations with their Hindu brethren. The presence of the army in significant strength may have helped to keep the extremists at bay. But this by itself could not have ensured communal harmony in the countryside unless the Sikh farmers were not as determined to ignore provocateurs as they were both before and after Operation Bluestar.

The deployment of the army in Punjab, the national capital and 28 other cities is, of course, imperative to contain the immediate threat. But neither it nor the para-military forces can be used as a substitute for the ordinary police for ever. They are simply not trained or equipped to maintain law and order. The trouble is that the capacity of the police to tackle the task, as the Dharam Vira commission so graphically underscored in its voluminous reports, has been gravely undermined by the criminalisation of politics on the one hand and proliferation of unenforceable laws on the other.

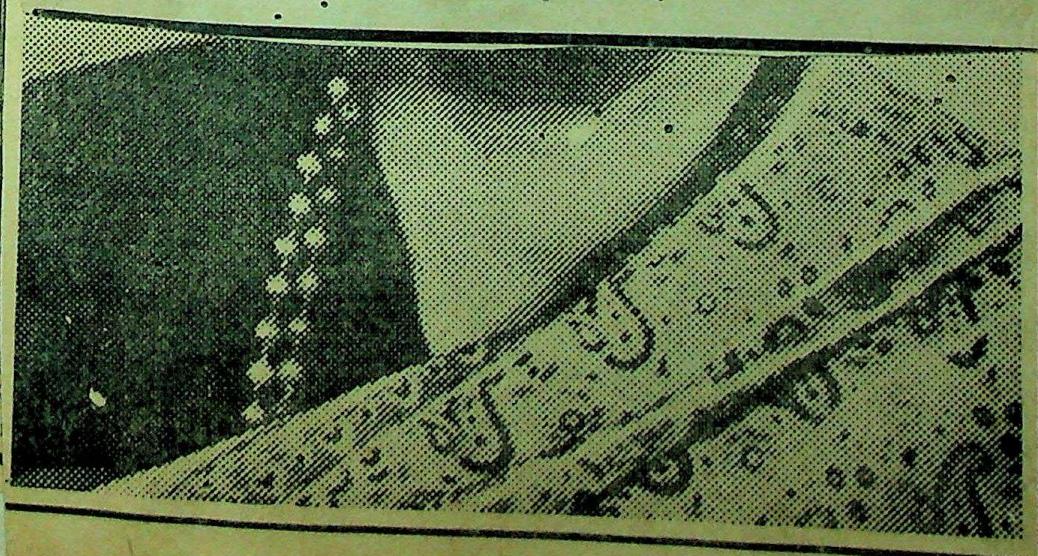
The proposition that politics has to be in command of all the major organs of the state, including the defence forces and the police, is beyond challenge. But it implies that they must have autonomy to serve the purposes of the state which, in the very nature of things, cannot be equated with the partisan interests of the politicians in power. Precisely because the armed

forces have enjoyed that kind of autonomy, their cohesion and efficiency is intact. But political interference in the working of the police, not excluding the intelligence services, has been the rule at all levels rather than an exception. Seldom, if ever, has it had a free hand in tackling smugglers, heroin-peddlers, bootleggers, tax-evaders, dacoits or professional gangsters who favour the politicians with a part of their loot. The "weapon" of postings, promotions and transfers has been so indiscriminately used by the politicians of all hues to bend the police officers to their will that very little is now left of the normal chain of command in the force in most states. No wonder it comes a cropper in almost every crisis.

Immediate steps to restore the effectiveness and morale of the police and the intelligence agencies by appropriate delegation of authority to the heads of these services is urgently called for. The conduct of orderly elections barely two months hence will critically depend on their efficacy. The two tasks are indeed intertwined. An early announcement of the election schedule would remove some of the current uncertainties that bedevil the political scene and thus help restore normalcy. On the other hand, the outcome of the elections may lose some credibility if violence, fear and intimidation continue to stalk the land during the run-up to the poll.

Political Alignments

Political alignments at the moment are in a state of flux and it is too soon to say how things will finally take shape. Though the opposition parties are discussing the modalities of "seat adjustments" among themselves to pit common nominees against Congress candidates, there is also serious talk among some of them on the need for "all secular forces" to get together in this hour of national crisis. The possibility of a dialogue to pave the way for the return of some of the old Congressmen in other parties, if Mr Rajiv Gandhi so desires, cannot, therefore, be ruled out. In any case, no opposition leader of any consequence seems to be in a mood for a head-on confrontation with the government. On the contrary, most of them are eager to co-operate with it in whatever way they can in tackling the unresolved "national" problems of Punjab and Assam and in containing civic strife. This in itself is heartening.



throw up his hands in despair on finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

not bothering to explain how the contradictory processes can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to tickle that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

Indira's ashes reach 15 states

NEW DELHI, November 5
(UND):

THOUSANDS of mourners paid their homage to the memory of Mrs Indira Gandhi when urns containing her ashes reached towns and cities in fifteen states and Union territories today.

Ashes were collected in 35 copper urns by her son Rajiv Gandhi in the early morning chill on the verdant banks of the Yamuna.

Chirping of birds blended with the chants of mantras as priests helped Mr Gandhi sift the bones from the ashes and put them in the urns wreathed with flowers.

Within an hour, the urns started their journey by trains and planes to all 22 states and nine Union territories.

Urns reached Bangalore, Panaji, Bombay, Calcutta, Patna, Shillong, Gangtok, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, Agartala, Jagmu, Simla, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Port Blair by air.

Police bands played "dead march" and thousands shouted "Indira Gandhi is immortal" as the urns were taken from different airports to public places where they will be kept for the next five days.

People offered flowers and bowed their heads in reverence as they filed past the urns.

Ashes will reach Madras, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad and other places tomorrow.

The three copper urns, brought by Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his family members were placed on a bed of flowers under a tree in the back of the Teen Murti House, where Mrs Gandhi lived during her father's prime ministership.

The President, Mr Zail Singh, Vice-President, Mr R Venkataraman, Union ministers and state a dynamic element some of them pointed out that the US has its Kennedys and Rockefellers and in the early period of its history there was the Adams family in the same position.

Meanwhile President Reagan again lashed out against the implication by the Soviet media that the CIA had something to do with the assassination. He said at an election meeting, "It was probably the world's biggest cheap shot in a long time".

GLOWING TRIBUTES

In Durban more than 15,000 people of all races on Saturday night paid glowing tributes to Mrs Indira Gandhi at a memorial service.

The service was convened by the non-racial United Democratic Front (UDF), Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and 24 Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious organisations and other social, civic and political organisations.

Indians in Nepal held a meeting at the Indian embassy ground around the same time as Mrs Indira Gandhi's funeral to mourn her passing away.

The resolution adopted at the meeting, which included some

governors and chief ministers were present when Mr Gandhi, the surviving son of the late Prime Minister, joined the priests in the religious ceremonies at "Teen Murti".

At "Teen Murti" the urns would be kept till November 11 after which the ashes would be scattered over the Himalayas Mrs Gandhi loved.

Continuous stream of people visited the "Teen Murti" where non-stop devotional music was on.

Earlier, at the 'Shanti Vana' large number of people had collected before the rituals began. The urns began their journey round the country amidst full-throated cries of "Indira Gandhi is immortal".

India's defence was Mrs Gandhi's prime concern and her ashes will lie on the peaks that have stood as deathless sentinels along the northern borders.

A group of relatives and ministers watched the ceremony which began at 6.30 a.m. and ended two hours later when the sun rose over the city skyline veiled by early November mist.

A wreath was placed and milk and honey were sprinkled on the ashes before they were collected.

After the ashes were collected, an army truck smothered with chrysanthemums backed up to the three-metre-high platform on which Mrs Gandhi was cremated on Saturday in the presence of tens of thousands of mourners.

The urns were transferred to the truck one by one. One urn wrapped in red cloth was taken by Mr Gandhi in his car.

The police and soldiers guarded the site, which is close to the samadhis of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sanjay Gandhi.

The Times of India News Service adds from Chandigarh: Hundreds of persons filed past the flower-covered brass urn containing the ashes of Mrs Indira Gandhi which was kept at a tastefully decorated

platform at the Punjab this afternoon.

Earlier, the urn was taken by a special vehicle to the Governor, Mr K.N. Singh, who was accompanied by Mr Beant Singh, former Mr R.L. Bhatia, former Congress committee member, Mr Mittal, M.P.

The urn was brought in a flower-decked jeep for the 150-kilometre route to the airport.

At the airport the urns were received by Mr. N. S. Mitra, senior adviser to Lt. Gen. K. Gowri Subramanian, and Mr. K. Mittal, chief secretary.

From the same place containing the ashes was brought by the Commissioner, Mr K. N. Singh, Jagannath Kaushal, minister. It was taken in a flower-decked jeep for the 150-kilometre route to the airport. The urns were received by Mr. N. S. Mitra, senior adviser to Lt. Gen. K. Gowri Subramanian, and Mr. K. Mittal, chief secretary.

At the Punjab station the contingent of Punjab police, reversed arms, saluted the last post. The procession, consisting of many officials including Mr. H. S. Dhillon, former PCC chief, Mr. Santok Singh, Mr. Pal Singh, Mrs. G. K. Singh, observed two minutes of silence in mark of respect to their leader.

Priests from the Christian and Muslim communities sang hymns from their

Life And Letters

Intentions Do Matter

By SHAM LAL

A JUDGE who will not attend to any case but insist on explaining the nature of law or justice to whoever comes to him for redress will soon find himself in a mental home. A professor of praxis (man's conscious shaping of history), however, runs no such risk. He can talk for hours on revolutionary practice sitting cosily by his fireside, while the winter wind howls outside, and not bother why it diverges so sharply from revolutionary theory. He can refuse to take notice of the grim shadow which falls between the idea and the reality of revolution as Prof. Vazquez does in his new book* and pat himself on the back for having evaded the very problem he was supposed to expound.

SHADOW

Prof. Vazquez is not troubled by the shadow which has blighted the hopes of three generations. Even today, many are eating their hearts out in prison cells, for having dared to look at it and cry out in despair. Indeed Prof. Vazquez's philosophy of praxis does not recognise any shadow. Praxis is what praxis does, not what it plans or proposes to do.

He is brutally frank about it. "The sphere of praxis", he explains with a nonchalance that will make every victim of a purge turn in his grave, "does not embrace intentions that have not assumed objective forms, however good those may be; what concerns us here is the product realised by the worker rather than the ideal object which existed only in his consciousness; the realised work of art rather than the sketch which served as a point of departure for creative activity; the revolution carried through and fulfilled rather than the revolutionary images which could not be given shape or form either because their utopian characters condemned them to remain a dream, or because the vicissitudes of the practical, revolutionary process forced them to be modified or abandoned altogether." In other words, what matters is "neither the original project nor its level of realisation...but the result."

This is pulling a fast one. How can any one possibly evaluate the result except in the light of the original project? Those who look forward to a higher form of democracy cannot but feel cheated if what they get in the end is a cruel parody of every democratic norm. Those who set out to abolish alienated labour cannot but be overcome by anguish if they find that their praxis has only restricted the scope for true, creative labour. Those who have been hoping to do away with the state and replace it with a society consisting of associations of free producers cannot but be horrified when they discover that their labours have helped the state to sharpen its claws.

It may be that the revolutionary projects have gone berserk because the utopian elements they har-

Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez: *The Philosophy of Praxis* (Merlin Press, £3).

king of a highly competitive system in an extremely poor and awfully fragmented society.

No one who accepts the premise of a *laissez-faire* society has any reason to get red in the face when he sees it putting a premium on greed. Similarly, no one who accepts the logic of a highly competitive political system has any cause to throw up his hands in despair on finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

The way various permutations

boured or because of the "vicissitudes of the political, revolutionary process". But that makes it all the more incumbent on a philosopher of praxis to examine these elements and have a close look at the shadow that falls "inevitably" (Prof. Vazquez's word) between the idea and the reality of praxis.

Prof. Vazquez teaches aesthetics at a university and he is perhaps tempted to look at revolutionary projects as if these were mere exercises in pictorial composition. But a miscarriage of an experiment with colours, however heart-rending it may be for the artist concerned, does not break any bones. The derailing of a revolutionary project, on the other hand, can break the spirit of an entire people and leave deep scars on the mind of the society in which they live. The canard that the original idea means as little in the one case as in the other can only make nonsense of a philosophy of praxis.

Not even the party faithful will unreservedly subscribe to Prof. Vazquez's philosophy which amounts to an apology for every cruel disparity that has occurred between revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. Indeed in societies which are supposed to have had their revolution, they often spend sleepless nights worrying about the gaps between the plan targets and the final production figures. For them planning is the praxis of today as insurrection was at the start of the revolution. If the one altered the rules of the political game for good, the other is concerned with transforming the shape of the economy.

ABSTRACT

Curiously enough, for all his emphasis on the primacy of action, Prof. Vazquez's treatment of transformation remains highly abstract. In his perspective it will be difficult indeed for readers here to draw any sharp line between the Lok Dal's project to change the balance between the town and the village in favour of the latter and the Congress (I)'s plan to alter decisively the balance of political forces in its favour. Prof. Vazquez will, of course, protest and claim that this is a travesty of what he has written and that his is a marxist perspective. This may be so. But there are a dozen marxist perspectives in vogue today. According to one, currently in fashion here, the question of distinguishing authoritarian from anti-authoritarian forces can be settled without looking at their socio-economic roots or examining the strains to which the existing contradictions inherent in it expose the prevailing political system!

But this is a mere digression. If Prof. Vazquez really believes in a marxist perspective he cannot possibly have nothing to say about the

existing anomalies, namely, the current conflicts between the Soviet and Chinese parties, the still huge gap between the rich and the poor, the readers to regard them as the collective intellectuals) or between the bare subsistence demands of the people. For, as I have argued again and again in this column, while on the one hand the system encourages more and more demands on the cake, on the other it undermines the national will and effort to increase the size of the cake fast enough.

Some political scientists and commentators evade the issue by not bothering to explain how the contradictory processes can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to

Chinese and Vietnamese parties, the suppression of dissent in most of the so-called revolutionary societies and the question whether the goal of a more free and non-alienated labour is drawing closer or receding.

It is perhaps safer to judge a party by its practical acts, not by its declarations. But how is one to evaluate a philosophy of praxis which fights shy of discussing any specific measure and so cannot be expected to produce any result? How is indeed one to judge Marx it some of the results his theories have produced have not been quite in accord with his wishes? Is it not relevant for a philosopher of praxis to inquire how far the ideas of the master have been misunderstood and misapplied or how far they are relevant in the changed circumstances of both rich and poor countries today?

ADAGE

When Prof. Vazquez does not evade the crucial issue he is content to state the obvious. He completes the adage that nothing succeeds like success (in praxis as elsewhere) by pointing out that nothing fails like failure. He has no tears to shed over the fate of those who have been consigned, to use a phrase popular in marxist circles, to the dustbin of history. They failed because they misjudged the limitations imposed by objective reality or the opportunities presented by it.

This philistine philosophy is, however, not entirely free from difficulties. For what happens if the success of yesterday is shown to be the failure of tomorrow? How is one to judge, for instance, the praxis of the so-called Gang of Four who once rode the crest of the wave of the future and now await trial as traitors to the cause of the future?

Prof. Vazquez will like the reader to look for the cause of violence in societies that have nationalised their means of production "at levels very distant from that of scarcity". But how can he possibly ignore the disruption of production resulting from war and civil war and the all-round tightening of belts dictated by the drive for primitive accumulation? Sartre is on surer ground in seeing the roots of terror and total suppression of dissent in conditions of scarcity. If the terror was more limited in China it was because agriculture (and therefore food supplies) there had suffered much less during the civil war time in Russia, apart from the fact that the Chinese party had a much stronger base among the peasantry and was far more cautious in handling it.

Mercifully, Prof. Vazquez claims to value free creative labour which is to him the heart of praxis. But he does not quite explain how he squares this with revolutionary projects which mean manipulating vast masses of men or with what he calls ideological systems "necessary to transform and educate the masses through a weakening of collective intellects".

characterised by "dominance and unequal participation." The way in which so many states have made a mockery of the land ceiling laws and a mess of the school system and some like Assam are encouraging the most noxious parochialism shows that any surrender to the demand for decentralisation will frustrate the will to achieve national integration and destroy what remains of the national perspective and national priorities. The kind of politicking that is going on today has already done enough damage to the national perspective.

The Nation

Dodging The Moral Issue

By SHAN SHAH

EXERCISED over the corruption in politics most people here have been oblivious until recently to the corruption of politics. Even today few realise that the second process is far more insidious than the first. It has already half erased the lines dividing right from left, secularism from communalism, fair from foul play, loyalty from treachery, slander from censure, reason from emotion and so on. It has given a new edge to caste, communal and regional conflicts and made their resolution far more difficult than before. If it goes on for some time it can end up by destroying the system itself.

Seeing how far the rot has spread, it is not surprising that many well-meaning persons have sought refuge in moral rhetoric. They nurse their own moral ego by denouncing the venality of one set of politicians or another or damning all of them as liars and crooks, and escape all responsibility by the simple expedient of translating into moral terms what is really a crisis of the political system. Their moralism is in fact an expression of despair. For, it all boils down in the end to the belief that nothing can be done to save the system if it continues to throw up unprincipled politicians and the public allows itself to be manipulated by them.

But who will bring about the needed moral transformation? A new Gandhi? The Mahatma himself died a sad man, having lived to see the massacre of half a million innocents and the ruin of all his hopes. A new Mao? The great helmsman, whatever he might have said for record, could not but have sensed, as he lay on his deathbed, that his successors would write off as a dead loss all the moral capital he had invested in the so-called cultural revolution. This is not to belittle the struggle led by the two great men to change the hearts of their countrymen, but merely to point to the limitations of their approaches which, for all their glaring differences, set the incubation of a new moral outlook as their goal.

TRANSFORMATION

To view all that is happening in the country today as the working out of a moral crisis is therefore to dodge the central issue. It does not help to bemoan the dreadful decline in the moral fibre of the men who have now come to the top or aspire to top positions. Many of them are in fact old men who did their political apprenticeship in the halcyon days of liberal values. It will be more to the point to find out whether the process of degeneration that has picked up momentum in the last five years or so was not inherent in the very working of a highly competitive system in an extremely poor and awfully fragmented society.

No one who accepts the premise of a *laissez-faire* society has any reason to get red in the face when he sees it putting a premium on greed. Similarly, no one who accepts the logic of a highly competitive political system has any cause to throw up his hands in despair on finding that, given the modest size of the national cake, there is no way of reconciling all the demands that are made on it.

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in the cities and

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and poor peasants in the villages,

have had no ideological qualms

this time in making common cause

with these who, on their own show

ing, represent landed interests in

the countryside. It is the same rea

son which has persuaded many

self-proclaimed anti-authoritarians to

join hands with those they were

denouncing as authoritarians until

yesterday.

It is futile to look back nostalgi

cally to the 'fifties to-day when s

many of the familiar landmarks have

disappeared, the politicisation pro

cess has gone much further, the

peasant castes, benefiting from the

green revolution, have acquired

new political muscle and want to

extend their gains, the pressure of

rising prices is being felt more and

more, the workers in several key

sectors of the economy are more

militant than ever before, the im

pact of the energy crisis and the

dire threat of an yearly instalment

of imported inflation it carries have

become all too grim, the very

forces of law and order have grown

restive and the international situa

tion is far more uncertain than it

was in the past.

PROCESSES

The new breed of politician with his crude ways and unkempt looks, his penchant for character assassination and his readiness to cross over to any side where he sees a temporary advantage, is as much a product of a difficult period as the gentlemanly type with his easy-going ways and liberal values was the product of an earlier time. What the unpropitious political climate has done to some of the men, who have survived from the old era and were supposed to have imbibed for good some of its values, speaks for itself. There is not one among them who has not compromised his political integrity in some way.

There is, of course, no lack of men who are desperately looking for a political solution to what they are honest enough to admit is a political, and not a moral, problem. But, for some curious reason, even they are reluctant to look too closely at the contradictory processes the parliamentary system sets in motion in a miserably poor country with a national cake too small to meet even the bare subsistence demands of its people. For, as I have argued again and again in this column, while on the one hand the system encourages more and more demands on the cake, on the other it undermines the national will and effort to increase the size of the cake fast enough.

Some political scientists and commentators evade the issue by not bothering to explain how the contradictory processes can be brought into line. It is not that they are unaware of the problem. They know it only too well. They just do not have the heart to

admit that its solution de
mands the forging of effec
tive sanctions for a much
juster distribution of the national
cake, new disciplines to contain
the demands on the cake, and a
new mobilisation of men and re
sources to increase its size at a
much faster rate than has been
possible so far. No talk about
structural changes in the national
policy can have any meaning unless
those who indulge in it define the
precise means by which these three
goals are to be achieved.

Indeed those who cherish demo
cratic liberties have to go much
further and explain how the new
sanctions can be forged, the new
disciplines imposed and a new
mobilisation effected without arm
ing the executive with more and
more powers and without curbing
drastically the rights of agita
tion and protest.

This is not to say that any break
with democratic norms, whatever
the form it takes, can resolve the
problem. Any system which legit
imises arbitrary exercise of power
has its own fearful logic—and one
curb on a democratic right sooner
or later leads to others. What
is more, it carries the seed
of its own decay inasmuch as it
alienates large sections of the
people, invites increasing resistance
from organised interests and re
quires the use of force and coer
cion on a more and more massive
scale. It is one thing, however,
to point to the dangers of an un
democratic polity and quite another
to argue that the kind of demo
cratic polity that was being pur
sued until 1974, and which even
then could not cope with the tasks
of political management, can work
with celerity in 1980, with the
political climate already vitiated
by new rancours and hatreds. In
fact the very talk of any far
reaching structural changes in po
lity, which assume a very broad
national consensus, sounds like a
cry in the wilderness in the pre
vailing circumstances. No party to
day has either the requisite political
insight or the moral authority to
organise such a consensus.

PATHEMIC

In this desparate situation there
is nothing more pathetic than the
belief that greater centralisation
offers a way out of the crisis. In
fact any such measure is more
likely to increase every difficulty
that is paralysing the national will
today. A belief in the efficacy of
decentralisation might have had
much to back it if panchayati raj
had released democratic initiative
at the grass-roots. The conclusion
of every sociologist, however, points
exactly in the opposite direction,
that the working of panchayats is
characterised by "domination and
unequal participation." The way
in which so many states have
made a mockery of the land ceil
ing laws and a mess of the school
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are encouraging the most poison
ous parochialism shows that any
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the national perspective.

Assessing Rajiv Gandhi

I - Within Nehru-Indira Framework

Assessing Rajiv Gandhi

I—Within Nehru-Indira Framework

MUCH has been written about Mr Rajiv Gandhi's two years in office. Most of the articles have been of ephemeral interest. But the critical assessments made by Mr Girilal Jain during this period fall in a special category. Through a series of articles on the politics and personality of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, he has brought to bear a historical approach to the study of contemporary challenges and Mr Rajiv Gandhi's responses to them.

Mr Jain has made the following three broad propositions:

First, that the Rajiv government has made a radical break with the Nehru-Indira approach to economic development. This departure has deprived the ruling party of its main plank which enabled it to win support among the people since independence.

Secondly, that Mr Rajiv Gandhi came to politics armed with what may be called the "Swatantra approach" which was the result of a lack of awareness "of the complexities of Indian society". Mr Rajiv Gandhi's political pre-disposition, therefore, was very different from Indira Gandhi's and his Swatantra philosophy found its expression in his first budget which was nothing but an exercise in Reaganomics. And thirdly, that the policies of the Prime Minister reflect the belief that all social and economic problems can yield to managerial-technological solutions.

Before undertaking an analysis of Mr Rajiv Gandhi's economic strategy, with special reference to the points raised by Mr Jain, two preliminary observations need to be made about the overall national response, particularly of the intellectual elite, to the policy initiatives by Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

First, men of the older generation are not able to reconcile themselves to the fact that someone of the post-independence movement generation has taken over the reigns of the country's governance. This has led to what one would like to call the "uncle syndrome". Words like "Babalog government" are symptomatic of a psychological problem of those who are on the wrong side of their sixties.

Secondly, even the Prime Minister's minor policy innovations are encountering deep resistance due to a streak in the Indian psyche. The past always represents a heritage of sorts and in India there is a strong tendency to look backwards to seek legitimacy for the things present.

Special Handicap

Mr Rajiv Gandhi, however, is facing a very special kind of handicap. Two of his predecessors in office happened to be his mother and grandfather. Mrs Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister for a good fifteen years and Mr Nehru ruled India for seventeen years. Whenever Mr Rajiv Gandhi makes any policy innovation he is said to be distancing himself from the past policies.

The "break from the past" theory arises out of a failure to appreciate the central reality that emerges from a close look at India's economic strategy in the past, viz. that it has evolved as a result of an inter-action between the institutions of democracy and the problems of the Indian people. The actualities of the socio-economic conditions have played a

(The writer is a former member of Parliament and practises at the Supreme Court.)

more decisive role than ideology.

Nehru and Indira Gandhi worked out their policies through what Arnold Toynbee called the process of "challenge and response". The Nehruvian strategy in the early years reflected through the Mahalanobis model—with its stress on a strong public sector and basic industries and consequently a secondary role for the private sector—was the only answer to India's long-term needs.

The core of the growth strategy of Indira Gandhi in the early years of her Prime Ministership also consisted of greater accent on expansion and strengthening of the public sector, maximisation of controls and regulations and keeping the private sector under leash. These policies were the necessary first steps and played a historic role in helping lay the foundations of a self-reliant economy.

But both Mr Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi were sensitive to the dynamics of a changing situation. Both made a distinction between ideology in the sense of goals and objectives and ideology in the sense of models and means. While remaining faithful to the broad goals, they did not hesitate to make corrections and modifications in the various means chosen to realise the objective.

If there was ever a time in the evolution of our economic policies which can be regarded as the turning point and making a 'break' with the past, it was not with Mr Rajiv Gandhi's first budget. The fiscal year 1976 marks a watershed when the budget presented by Mr C. Subramaniam negotiated a major change in the course of Mrs Gandhi's policies of the past six years by (a) sharply reducing maximum tax rate from 97 per cent (1970) to 66 per cent and (b) giving several reliefs and concessions to the corporate sector and affluent sections with a view to encouraging savings and investments.

Changing Situation

With her return to office in 1980, Mrs Indira Gandhi again picked up the threads of 1976 and heralded an era of liberalisation of the economy and of fiscal reforms. What was started in 1976 took a more concrete shape from 1980 onwards. During the years 1980-84 Mrs Gandhi's government went in for a massive IMF loan in addition to borrowing a record sum of \$ 3 billion from the international market, softened the rigours of industrial licensing, permitted the industrial sector to import capital goods, relaxed certain restrictions on FERA and MRTP companies and permitted some of the foreign companies to expand their existing capacities. Besides, she allowed the foreign companies to enter into certain new areas hitherto reserved for the indigenous industries and to prospect for oil in offshore fields.

Mrs Gandhi's policy of liberalisation was hailed by many, particularly in the West, as being a necessary response to the challenges of the economy. *The Financial Times* described Mrs Gandhi's policies as allowing a "breeze of market forces" and making "a radical departure" from the past policies it described the reforms as being of a "sweeping nature" and said that these were intended to loosen the "straight-jacket of"

Another journal commented in 1982 that if Franklin Roosevelt moved to save capitalism from the capitalists, Mrs Indira Gandhi was trying to save socialism from the socialists.

Only a historical perspective can explain the various changes in the planning policies over the years. By 1976 the Indian economy had acquired a certain strength and sophistication and was poised for a take-off. After the successful completion of five plans, the country had avoided the debt-trap, investment was increasing and had reached more than 20 per cent of the GDP. And yet the economy was not growing as fast as was its potential. Many of the restrictions and regulations regarding expansion, import of technology and high rate of taxation were adversely affecting initiative, innovation, investment and growth.

By the time Mrs Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, a kind of broad consensus was emerging in favour of the view that the Indian economy could be put on the road of faster development only by a judicious choice of economic reforms intended to relax the regime of controls and free the economy to realise its full potentials. Mrs Gandhi only responded to the pressure that was building up.

Major Difference

The decision to liberalise the economy, therefore, was taken by Mrs Indira Gandhi only in response to the needs of the economy to which Mr Rajiv Gandhi gave a further fillip. If Mrs Gandhi's initiatives represented the first instalment of the needed reforms, Mr Rajiv Gandhi came forward with the second instalment. These policies have overlapped and the Seventh Plan provides a meeting ground of economic strategies and approaches of the two.

There is, however, one major difference. In initiating the reforms, Mrs Indira Gandhi was somewhat hesitant and was faced with a problem of credibility as her later policies marked a departure from her past policies. Mr Rajiv Gandhi has not faced any such problem. It is true that his economic philosophy has been very widely misunderstood. His low-profile approach, his penchant for details, his reluctance to expound a holistic view of things and his somewhat mechanical approach—all these have led many to believe that he lacks a comprehensive view of the country's political economy, that he has a somewhat superficial understanding of the Indian reality and that his are just fragmentary and *ad hoc* responses to certain aspects of the economic challenge. Gradually the misunderstanding is being dispelled.

Never since the Mahalanobis model was given a final shape have the problems and the goals of the economy been given such serious consideration as by the present Prime Minister and his men. His perception of the economic challenges and his policy choices were partly determined by the mood of the nation. If in 1969 the prominent feature of the people's mood was the expectation that Mrs Indira Gandhi would initiate policies which would restore the faith of the poor in the democratic process, the dominant mood in 1985 was one of high expectations that the pace of growth would be accelerated.

(To Be Concluded)

MATCHING Fulling National Heritage and the Prime Minister's Digitization: eGangotri.
mood in 1985 was Mr Rajiv Gandhi's own basic approach and perception of the economic challenge. He believed at the time he assumed office that the crisis of India's economy had little to do with the ideological principles inasmuch as the broad goals and the main thrust of the planning strategy were long settled; it concerned the methods and implementation mechanisms. He had, therefore, little use for absolutist and purely doctrinal solutions. Like Nehru he believed in trying to find a practical correlative to established theories.

Those who are planning for the future, he felt, must be ready to correct the distortions of the past and to make the necessary innovations and adjustments.

It is these two trends in his thinking—to bring theory and practice together and refusal to treat the past as sacred—that has led many critics to conclude that Mr Gandhi has opted for American-style pragmatism. They have confused his style and approach with the substance and content of his policies. Mr Gandhi has tried to be pragmatic without being a pragmatist. He has shown a positive inclination in favour of placing a high accent on efficiency, superior technology and management skills but he has not given any evidence of following the philosophies of James and Dewey.

The key element in his economic thinking is his endorsement of the broad goals of economic development that Nehru and Indira Gandhi set before the country as well as the choice of planned development as their basic strategy. Like Nehru he believes that India's economic backwardness can be removed only by creating more wealth and employment opportunities. Like Indira Gandhi he believes that a rise in per capita income is no indication of economic development across the board and a fully developed anti-poverty strategy aimed at transferring incomes to the poorest among the poor must form an integral part of any growth strategy.

Growth Strategy

Planning is central to Mr Gandhi's economic strategy. Far from abolishing planning, he has put more operational meaning into the concept of planning by giving it greater depth and dimension. Even though the role of the private sector has been enlarged, it is for the first time that the private sector has been brought directly within the fold of planning. The Seventh Plan encompasses a blueprint for the growth of private sector also. Similarly Mr Gandhi's approach of "positive intervention" in place of a regime of controls and regulations has put more teeth into the concept of planning. He once summed up his approach to the state's role succinctly "We want control", he said, "not controls".

Mr Gandhi's approach is thus the very anti-thesis of Reaganomics which reinforces *laissez faire* and of the Swatantra philosophy which believed that economic development should be left to the market forces. While the Swatantra believed in the "night watchman's concept" of the state, in Mr Gandhi's scheme of things the state is meant to exercise a firmer control over the entire gamut of economic activities. Similarly, there are basic differences in the policies of Mr Gandhi and Mr Reagan. Our Prime Minister has a definite strategy to alleviate poverty. Mr Reagan believes that America does not need a strategy to combat poverty. Distributive justice is anathema to Mr Reagan. To Mr

Gandhi it is a necessary concomitant and the Prime Minister's Digitization: eGangotri.
Mr Gandhi treats planning as a micro as well as a macro concept. His major innovations and distinctiveness of style have been reflected in what can be called the strategic corrections in the development strategy. His growth strategy provides a broad framework within which he has evolved a series of responses to different aspects of economic challenges facing the country. Far from being *ad hoc* in nature, his perspective covers every department of the economy. The different strands of which the web of his strategy is composed have an integrative character. The following are some of the salient features of this broad strategy.

First, the basic premise of the strategy is that our growth has not been fast enough and distribution can be a meaningful proposition only in a rapidly expanding economy. His main stress, therefore, has been on activating various agents of development and strengthening the growth impulses of the economy by creating conditions in which this may be possible. The need to create more wealth has been given a new thrust and impetus. In consonance with the consensus arising from the post-take-off stage he has taken steps to relax such restrictions and controls as were having a stifling effect on the economy.

Main Stress

Secondly Mr Gandhi, has moved from theology to rationalism in his attitude towards the problems of the public and private sectors. Rejecting what has been called a "versus" approach, he has given operational meaning to the concept of complementariness. Despite the contextual differences both the sectors have grown in a protectionist culture and both have been insulated from the market. The Prime Minister has asked both to be more competitive and efficient through technological upgradation. He has asked the public sector too to act as an accelerator rather than a speed breaker. He wants it to play a key role in mobilising resources for the plan. Similarly, he seeks the integration of the private sector into the planning process. The purpose is clear; he wants both sectors to realise their full potential and share the burden of development.

Thirdly, the Prime Minister's greatest effort has been directed towards integrating a fully developed anti-poverty strategy into an overall development strategy. He regards a direct attack on poverty as a pre-condition for further development and has accorded a high priority to integrating distributive and employment policies into an overall production plan. His deep interest in diagnosing what ails the anti-poverty programme has revealed many conceptual flaws and implementation inadequacies.

Lastly, Mr Gandhi has made a major contribution to the economic planning and decision making by bridging the gap between the conceptualisation of an idea and its implementation. He has rejected the traditional belief that leadership and management are two different and distinct categories. He seems to follow the motto that to have ideas is good but to implement them is better, thus combining the do-how with the know-how. All in all, Mr Gandhi may have alternated the "little traditions" of the Nehru-Indira strategy for economic development but he has remained committed to the "great tradition" of that strategy.

(concluded)

Not Pragmatist

BY DEVENDRA NATH DWIVEDI

Political Commentary After The Darjeeling Drama

By INDER MALHOTRA

EVERYTHING, they say, is fair in love, war and elections. Even so, there are issues which ought to be above and beyond electoral politics and politicking. The emotive and explosive agitation for a separate state of Gorkhaland in the sensitive hills of North Bengal should, by any reckoning, be included among them. But, unfortunately, it has not been, at any rate, so far.

On the contrary, the issue has become a plaything of partisan politics between Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his Congress Party on the one hand and the CPM-led Left Front ministry in West Bengal on the other. Both sides have had their eyes focussed on the forthcoming state assembly elections which might explain the angry polemics between them.

Mr Gandhi, allowing his role as Congress president to get the better of his responsibilities as Prime Minister, has used the Gorkhaland agitation as a stick with which to beat the Marxists who have been entrenched in power in West Bengal for a decade. He has tried to burden them with both the blame for allowing the agitation to acquire its present dimensions and the exclusive responsibility for dealing with it.

Hitting back at him in kind, the CPM and its allies have accused the Centre of "colluding" with the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) for the "unworthy" purpose of undermining the West Bengal government. This enables them to appeal to the Bengali "pride" of the vast majority of the state's population.

The country has even been treated to a bizarre debate between New Delhi and Calcutta on whether or not the agitation is anti-national, as if this disputation is more important than the dangerous situation developing on the ground where people have been killed, public and private properties burnt and passions roused to fever pitch.

Bizarre Debate

If the perils of this peculiar approach were not apparent earlier these ought to be clear after the dismal drama during the Prime Minister's recent visit to Darjeeling. Mr Jyoti Basu's petulant refusal to join the Prime Minister there was the least part of the sad story though it once again underscored the low depths to which relations between the Centre and West Bengal have descended.

The boycott of the Prime Minister's public meeting was complete and reflected the truculence and militancy of the GNLF. That it enabled him to "expose" the hollowness of the CPM's charge of "collusion" between the Congress and the GNLF could have been only cold comfort to him, especially in view of the subsequent reaction of the GNLF chief, Mr Subhash Gheishing, that was as ominous as it was offensive. Even Mr Gheising's understandable pique over his inexplicable failure to meet the Union home minister, Mr Buta Singh, in New Delhi—inexplicable because of the earlier cordial correspondence between the two—cannot excuse the vehemence and virulence of his outburst.

Abundantly using first person singular and adopting a tone even Mafia dons prefer to avoid, Mr

Gheising has practically rejected the Prime Minister's entire stand point by point. Mr Gandhi insists that the responsibility for talking to and dealing with the GNLF is that of the state government only. He has also rejected both separate statehood and regional autonomy within West Bengal for Darjeeling.

But Mr Gheising has haughtily refused even to talk to the state government. His demand for a separate state "to preserve our identity", he says, is addressed to the Centre and New Delhi's failure to concede it would have "serious consequences". And he has compounded his affrontery by declaring that if any attempt is made by the central and West Bengal governments to hold elections in Darjeeling, "I will teach them a lesson".

Whether or not the Gorkhaland agitation is anti-national—the Marxists were perhaps ill-advised in branding it so—the question must be asked whether Mr Gheising would have dared to talk in this unacceptable tone without some instigation from somewhere. Also, this former lance-naik of the Indian army has been quoting Jefferson and drawing upon complex constitutional precedents from diverse countries. Has he been able to do so on his own?

Paramount Task

In view of all this, does one have to say more to drive home the point that the paramount task of the central government and the West Bengal ministry is not to fight each other but to join hands in combating the menace symbolised by Mr Gheising's fulminations. Both sides can find numerous other issues to maximise their chances in the elections which are, in any case, still some time away.

The West Bengal government has suggested that they be held on February 22. But this date does not suit a number of other states which have got to go to the polls at the same time as West Bengal. This is particularly true of Jammu and Kashmir, at present snow-bound, which would like the elections to take place in May. The Election Commission has yet to consult all concerned and give its verdict.

Meanwhile, the Congress Party has a great deal going for it in West Bengal. It is unlikely to be able to defeat the Marxists. But, if it plays its cards skilfully, it can substantially improve its present position in the assembly. According to some indications, it can even double its present strength of 55 in a House of 294. The CPM is handicapped greatly because that grandmaster of electoral strategy and tactics, Mr Promode Dasgupta, is no more. Having been in power for ten years the Marxists have begun to look stale. To make matters worse, their performance in government has been, to say the least, poor. Exasperated questions are indeed being asked by the West Bengal voters about endless power cuts, industrial stagnation and rising unemployment.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who has been drawing enormous crowds wherever he has gone in West Bengal, has been turning the knife in the wound by pitilessly pointing out that the Marxist ministry, though loudly protesting against the Centre's

niggardliness, has failed to utilise the allocations that have, in fact, been made. Apparently, even funds made available under the 20-point programme have remained unspent.

These are all telling points. But the trouble is that, like the attempt to belabour the Marxist ministry over the Gorkhaland issue, excessive criticism of its lethargy and incompetence by the Prime Minister and other central leaders, as distinct from West Bengal Congressmen, tends to have the reverse of the desired effect.

Even so staunch a pro-Congress newspaper as *Anand Bazar Patrika* has started writing in a tone indicative of Bengali impatience with the criticism of the West Bengal ministry emanating from New Delhi. It has even asked: "Why should Mr Gandhi go about like an emperor, disbursing largesse to West Bengal and other states like Kashmir, Maharashtra and Haryana?"

West Bengal leaders of different hues, who concede that things in their state are bad, raise another pertinent poser. The Prime Minister, they say, has been travelling to West Bengal repeatedly and at a hot pace. "Why does he not go to Bihar where things are a lot worse, indeed despairing?"

The heaviest millstone around Mr Gandhi's neck in West Bengal, however, is his own party organisation riven by chronic and rampant factionalism. The state's representation in the central cabinet does not enthuse anyone, least of all the cacophonous denizens of Calcutta's Congress Bhawan. The party has no one in its ranks in West Bengal who can be a credible alternative to Mr Jyoti Basu.

Having said this, one must look beyond the next election and revert to the Gorkhaland problem which will not go away easily.

Verbal Fracas

After his first verbal fracas with the Marxists, Mr Rajiv Gandhi had asked the policy advisory committee, headed by Mr G. Parthasarthy, to make an in-depth study of the Gorkhaland problem. Its report, the last presented by the committee before his resignation, ought to provide a basis for the Centre's policy.

It is clear that the country cannot afford to create a new state in so strategic and sensitive an area through which passes the narrow Siliguri Corridor separating China's Chumbi Valley and Bangladesh and linking West Bengal plains with the North-East. But it will be easier to curb the illegitimate demands of the Darjeeling agitators if the legitimate grievances of the people are attended to.

Regional autonomy within the state seems unacceptable to Mr Rajiv Gandhi. But in a number of states over the years attempts have been made to mitigate genuine regional grievances through regional allocation of state funds for economic development and social welfare. The system has not already worked satisfactorily. Witness the discontent in the Vidarbha region in the Congress-run state of Maharashtra. But this is no reason to abandon the useful device. It can and should be improved, if necessary, by institutionalising it.

On Patriotism

Sir,—I have read with interest Mr A.S. Abraham's article "Symbols of nationhood" (November 28). There are indeed limits to protest as there are limits to coercion, and both limits must be reflected in the national consensus if we wish to preserve ourselves as a liberal and civil society. The other day Mr P. chidambaram, the minister of state for internal security, very theatrically asked the lok Sabha while responding to the discussion on the question of national symbols: "What is a flag if it is not saluted and what is an anthem if it is not sung?" He did not remember that on the last Independence Day the Prime Minister did not salute the national flag, nor did he wear a cap which is a mark of respect in Indian culture. However, the Patna high court has just dismissed a case against him under the Prevention of Insult to National Honour Act, 1971 on the ground that "it was not mentioned anywhere that the Prime Minister should salute the national flag and wear a cap".

When the Act was passed by the Parliament in 1971 the government spokesman in both Houses had made it clear that no one was going to be forced to sing the national anthem. Now, even those who show due respect to the anthem without singing it are going to be coerced into doing so! Perhaps the new law may also require that whenever a citizen sees that national flag he must stand up and salute it and whenever he hears the national anthem, played or sung, he must stand and join in singing. The new Act may also direct the electronic media that all programmes must begin and end with the national anthem and the citizen, in order to inculcate patriotism, must sing it simultaneously, even in the privacy of his home. How many policemen shall the state employ to enforce such laws and a law which cannot be effectively enforced only detracts from the majesty of law and arouses contempt for authority!

In my view, the Supreme Court need not have gone into the question of freedom of conscience and of religion and could have based its view in the Kerala case on the simple reading of the 1971 Act, taking into account the intent of the legislature as reflected in the proceedings of the two Houses.

Patriotism cannot be taught by the rod nor can integration be brought about by coercion. I, therefore, feel that the law should remain as it is and the citizen should not be required to salute the flag or sing the national anthem on the pain of punishment. The Republic shall come to no grief but the liberal spirit shall triumph, if some conscientious objectors do not salute the flag or sing the anthem but at the same time do not go to the other extreme of insulting the flag or disturbing the singing.

SYED SHAHABUDDIN

New Delhi.

Nation At The Crossroads

By Mulk Raj Anand

back on the long and what is useful as a guide to thought and action. The modern mind cannot take culture without criticism (devastating criticism), if the old is to be of value for the new. I feel that the attitude of many of us towards the past of India has so far been sentimental, as though we wished to take on the entire 3,000 years of ancient and mediaeval India. Thus often we seem to want to put the whole range of the Himalayas on our shoulders, whereas what we may really need are a few herbs found by our Rishi Munis to cure our mental sickness.

We know that for 2,000 years at least, inspite of the energetic protests of our saints, caste orthodoxy has corroded the foundations of our society. The "chosen race" complex of one Brahminical oligarchy after another suppressed the bulk of the people during the thousand years before the Buddha. And after his revolt, again the Brahmins succeeded in ousting the humanist doctrine preached by the Enlightened One, bringing the caste order more rigidly into operation through the Dharmashastras. In the early mediaeval period began the bitter wrangles of the two main religions. And these did not end, inspite of the various syntheses arrived at from time to time. Also, our country was broken up into fragments by the parochial feudal oligarchies, until a superficial unity was brought in by the British Raj

e, the new intelligentsia not reconcile ourselves, to theocracy we accepted it. And it may be bring the liberation of the leaders of national movement, life in politics, and arian at heart. The nce by the bulk of of the ritual and of the various them worship the religion more than g ethos. Inspite of dhi's equation of untouchability ggle for freedom, if Hindus have rest. We have foragers of the false our main reli ed by the alien Imperialist era, version of religion s followed.

ow reaping the ds, which we our to grow by misrship of ritual as not wish to deninal religion by tion the right to he prophets and one can gainsay the Vedas, the Koran, the Bible ranth Sahib. But a long periods of moral stagnation our past. Caste ntic to Hinduism. ed. The Shias ght each other. came more im e teaching of "I am neither him, I want to

with its railways, revenue and long the special privileges. postal system. This was followed by constant promotion of communal interests, through reservation of seats for the Muslims and the minorities, and deliberate provocation of hostility ultimately leading to the artificial

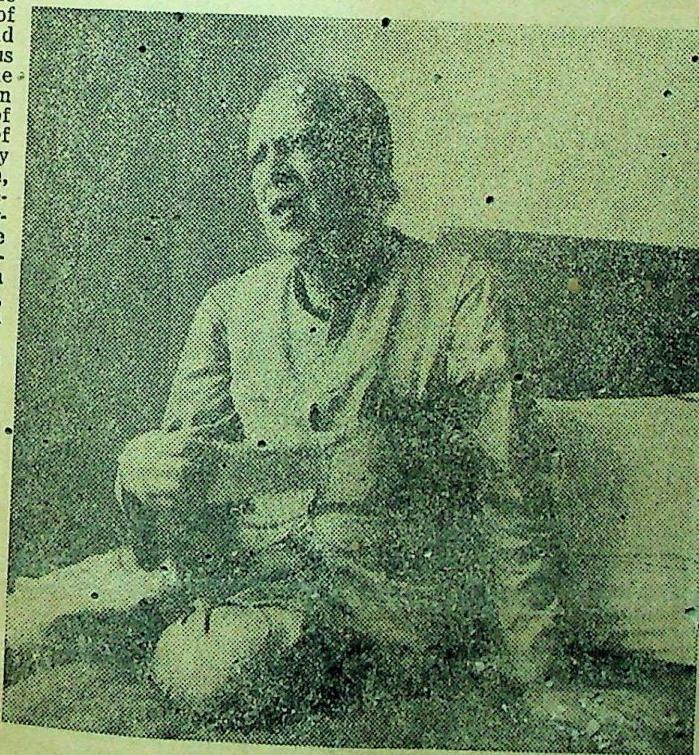
division of our country.

On the attainment of freedom, we inherited, beneath the genuine nationalism of the advance guard, a society with the hangovers of innumerable divisions, based on religious, racial and social snobbery—unconnected, disparate congeries of people, who could live in superficial tolerance as long as the age-old customs were not disturbed by the coming of opportunities for betterment under a Constitution based on fundamental human rights. As soon as these became available, the upper castes began to resent

the emergence of Harijans as economic equals, the Muslim League re-emerged, the Hindu chauvinist groups like the RSS began to build private armies. The scheduled castes wished to pro-

politics divides people into distinct groups, co-existing in uran- easy peace, watching to see which gets the bigger morsel. The ruling intelligentsia whose duty it was to analyze the causes of disruption until recently, lived in a cuous daze, wrapped up in symbols of power and authority, it benignly contemplated the nihilistic and negati forces working in its own rankly told people not to do t or that, reluctantly threaten to impose penalties against wrongdoers, but remained numbed by the vertical stra cation of superior and inferi without emphasizing a philosophy of life for secular, democratic State, visioned by Jawaharlal Nehru. Commercialists of all ki

"Our dilemma remains: are we to remain consigned to an ancient fatalism, accept caste orthodoxy, fight for power on the pretext preserving language and religion? Or are we become individuals in a new democratic order growing towards self-perfection on the basis the dignity of each human being and equal opportunities for all in an Insani Baradari, humanist brotherhood?"



Mulk Raj Anand

have lent themselves to the rich quick gospel of the V and are not worried by the blem of national integra because they can sell goods well enough in a sca economy. The egalitarian implicit in the planned econ are brushed aside by the polists, as being against hi nature, and public enterpri vides no real alternative production of goods and ser The Welfare State has reduced to a myth and dubbed doctrinaire socialism.

The intellectuals, who consider themselves above battle, cynically shrug shoulders and survive in a tually pleasing well of fration. Certain sections, who make clever phrases and existentialist despair, are implication, superior, and humanist thinkers are a species, supposedly co Communists. There is fact between the literary me thinkers, and the scientist as well as the ruling intell gentia, because of the lack o a brains trust for discussing moot points of reconstruction at the Centre, as well as in the various regions, to lay the basish of national integration, through criticism, active discussion and exchange of opinion.

ties. The majority of younger writers, with some notable exceptions, adapt the fiction of Western paperbacks which flood the market. The characters in the contemporary novels and

(Continued on Page III)

Voluntary Common Civil Code

The Way To Integration

By BADR-UD-DIN TYABJI

THE cry for a common civil code has a bizarre history. Let us confine ourselves here only to the period after independence. The Constituent Assembly rocked by the impact of post-partition problems—not least by the absence and subsequent defection of most of its Muslim members—stalled it. It left it over for resolution at a more propitious juncture. Its leaders thought that a time would come when the wounds inflicted by partition and its aftermath—physical and, even more grievous, psychological—would have healed; and national political and economic integration would have proceeded far enough. In this way the feeling of national oneness and linked destiny in our widely disparate—social, cultural and economic—society would have grown strong so that our people would more or less spontaneously decide to place themselves as a whole under the umbrella of one equitable and even civil code.

Unfortunately, neither in politics nor economics did the desideratum visualised by our constitution-makers materialise. Neither was this particular issue permitted to slumber peacefully until an appropriate hour. From time to time, painfully demonstrating to the world the uneasy equation, and the lack of communication existing particularly between the two main Indian communities, cries for it were raised. On occasion this was done precisely when their relations were at the lowest and suspicion between the two regarding each other's bona fides was at its highest.

Counter-Blast

Thus, the cry for the urgent promulgation of a common civil code became like a red rag to an enraged bull for the minorities, especially the Muslims. And as a counter-blast, Indian Muslims began making unreasoning, and often self-defeating and self-mutilating claims. In shriller and shriller minatory tones, they insisted on upholding anti-social customs, practices and conduct, some even contrary to Quranic edicts, and others to its principles and the Prophet's injunctions, customs that had in most Muslim states been specially prohibited. To secure the maximum propaganda effect and win Muslim populist support all this was carried out under the banner of Islam, ostensibly to protect Muslim personal law, a law which had already been guaranteed under the Constitution. The law everyone was protecting however remained uncodified and varied from place to place and almost from sect to sect within the body of what one calls the Indian Muslim community. This community is as divided and at odds with itself as is the Hindu community, or for that matter most other things in India, including Muslim personal law.

Recently, we had a well-staged, Indian style exhibition of this in the furore aroused over the Supreme Court's judgment on the notorious Shah Bano case. Its climax or anti-climax (depending on one's view of the *raison d'être* of the Indian film industry) was the passage of the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill about two months ago. After its enactment the

Muslim community (as defined above) has on the whole succeeded in deluding itself (temporarily at least) of having gained a victory over those it considers its tormentors in the majority community and the blacklegs within itself.

In reality of course the Muslims have gained nothing but lost much, especially that in which they pride themselves most—their *izzat* and Islam's resilience. Their tormentors too, whom they claim to have worsted have lost nothing, only gained: having been handed another stick to beat the Muslims with, and lower the prestige of Islam in general esteem. Southe's oft-quoted summing up of such victories' irresistibly comes to mind: 'And everybody praised the Duke/ who this fight did win.' But what good came of it at last? Quoth little Peterkin: 'Why that I cannot tell,' said he, 'but 'twas a famous victory.'

Alternative Course

In such circumstances the decision of the victorious Duke to outflank both the tormentors and the no-changers (giving them time to cogitate over the fruits of their past postures) while presenting them with an alternative course to follow, a course in which neither party can gain at the cost of the other, while both can profit—each according to its capacity to respond to present-day exigencies, is a bold and imaginative act.

The prospect of the promulgation of a voluntary common civil code (VCCC) for India must gladden the heart of every Indian, who longs for social reform in all the communities, classes and sections of our society. Without a sustained, even-handed attempt to advance on this course, as the early forgotten idols of our nascent nationalism—Dadabhai Naoroji, Telang, Ranade, Badruddin Tyabji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Gokhle and a host of others—had clearly seen and advocated, there seems little hope of India settling down and functioning fairly as an equitable, peaceful nation state in the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, the whole post-independence record effecting social reforms by legislative fiat in India has been so dismal—just think of what happened to the prohibition laws, the Abolition of Untouchability Act, the Dowry Prohibition Act, even the Anti-Child Marriages Act, and the tragic denouement of Sanjay Gandhi's family planning drive—that one shudders to think what will happen to this admirable proposal if it is also carried through as ham-handedly and as ineffectually as some of those mentioned. If it is carried through ham-handedly, the no-changers will overnight emerge as ghazis; if it is ineffectual the tormentors will open out a new front. Who knows, in the frenzy of the moment some bring student of contemporary Marxist experimentation will not raise the cry for us to follow the latest Bulgarian solution for creating social homogeneity in a multi-racial and religious state. "Let all national names be of one uniform texture", he will proclaim. Then, all will be well, if we should the same, we shall

be the same."

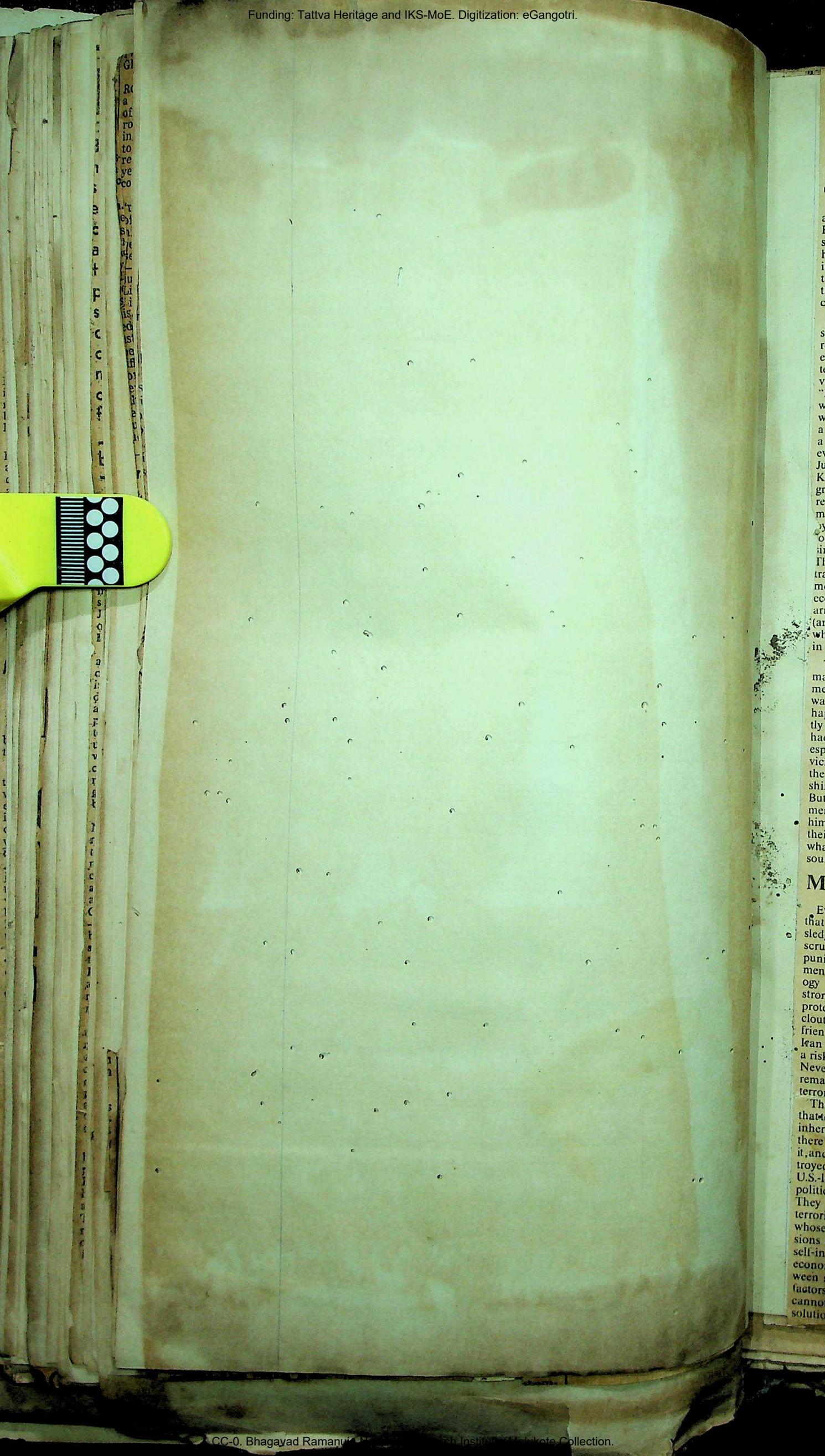
We must guard against such delusions. We must move forward with circumspection, slowly if necessary but surely, taking the majority of persons belonging to each particular community, section and sect along with us in a co-operative joint effect. Obviously the drafting of the VCCC will have to be done through a body of persons who believe that such a measure is necessary for promoting national integration. To repeat, there is no need to rush through matters, only to keep up a sustained drive forward, to remove doubts and hesitations with rational arguments and to widely disseminate information about what the position is on these matters in other societies and states. Ample time and opportunity for debate and discussion on the provisions of the bill must be ensured, and also for considering the ways and means by which exemption from any of its provisions to any citizen of India who choose to exercise it as a deliberate voluntary act is to be obtained. This has to be done not only in consultation with those who are in favour of the act, but also after taking into account the objections of its opponents.

Social Welfare

One of the endemic bureaucratic characteristics of official social welfare work in India is that the qualifications—academic and even more of temperament, upbringing and personality generally—of the persons selected for carrying out such programmes, whether in cities or rural areas, are unsuited for the tasks entrusted to them. Often they are unable to establish a rapport with those whom they are to influence. Frequently, they do not know the latter's mother tongue and/or are unable to break bread or take a cup of tea with them. They remain aliens in a milieu foreign to them—socially and culturally. How can they then engender empathy between each other? More often than not indifference develops between them, if not active antagonism. Therefore for spreading the therapeutic message of the VCCC this aspect of the administrative set-up required for propagating it and winning over diverse pockets of resistance, dissidence and misunderstanding of its true purport, must receive the closest and most anxious scrutiny.

Voluntary social workers and organisations should also of course be encouraged and given all reasonable assistance to participate in this task, provided assurance is forthcoming after due scrutiny of their membership composition and past record that the organisation is not a sectarian one and has the capacity to accomplish the task. Similar care will have to be taken in preparing the spoken and written material that will have to be liberally circulated, broadcast and telecast.

Thus, if the Duke follows up his brilliant opening flanking movement, and plans, directs and supervises his subsequent manoeuvres with equal skill, elan and logistic support, we may indeed be able in good time with thankful heart, to echo uninhibitedly, the triumphal cry: 'twas a famous victory!'



Fighting Global Terrorism

U.S. Moral Posture Crumbles

By A.S. ABRAHAM

THE arms-for-hostages scandal has demolished all the assiduous PR hype of which the Reagan administration has been so skilful a purveyor. But it has been hurt most on the moral front, which it sought to appropriate through sustained and sanctimonious rhetoric that could, as it now turns out, camouflage the shabbiest actions.

Nowhere has the lofty moral stance the Reagan White House regularly strikes been more in evidence than on combating global terrorism. This was Mr Reagan's very own latter-day crusade against "Murder Incorporated", as, ever the wit, he once labelled it. It was to be waged, like the crusades of old, with a single-minded ferocity inspired by a Manichaean concept of good and evil. "So there we have it", he said in July 1985, "Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua..." The growth of terrorism in recent years results from the increasing involvement of... these... outlaw states run by the strangest collection of misfits, boozey tunes, and squallid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich". They had to be stopped in their tracks by a combination of measures: diplomatic ostracism, economic punishment, the denial of arms to "Operation Staunch", (another Reagan coinage) and, when push came to shove, a punch in the nose.

The country Mr Reagan chose to make an example of in the enforcement of his anti-terrorism policy was colonel Gaddafi's Libya. As it happened, the colonel was not exactly the darling of the third world. He had rubbed so many poor countries, especially those in his immediate vicinity, the wrong way that when the Americans kicked him in the shin, not everyone was unhappy. But they dressed up their punishment as intended, not merely to cut him down to size, but to proclaim their determination to snuff out what they were convinced were the sources of global terrorism.

Menacing Devils

Even at that time, it was observed that while the Americans had used a sledgehammer to swat a fly, they had scrupulously refrained from punishing Syria or Iran, no less menacing devils in their demonology of terrorism. Syria was too strong and too much under Soviet protection to be given the kind of clout on the head that relatively friendless Libya had received, while Iran was self-evidently too much of a risk to warrant any such exercise. Nevertheless, both countries remained at the top of the American terrorist league table.

The Americans were convinced that terrorism, as they defined it, was inherently and unmitigatedly evil, there could be no compromise with it, and its practitioners had to be destroyed or at least crippled through U.S.-led concerted global economic, political and even military action. They were deaf to arguments that terrorism is a complex phenomenon whose moral and political dimensions are intertwined with national self-interest, historical injustice, economic inequity within and between states, and other deep-rooted factors, and that for these reasons it cannot be remedied by simplistic solutions based largely, sometimes

exclusively, on force. Such views were dismissed by the U.S. as moral equivocation and dangerous relativism.

How cockeyed the U.S. notion of terrorism is, how, for all its pseudo-moral trappings, it can be no more than a means of pursuing American interests, is plain from Mr Reagan's description of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua as "terrorists" and of the pro-U.S. and U.S.-financed forces opposed to them, the "Contras", as "freedom-fighters". The Sandinistas triumphed in 1979 over one of the longest and most oppressive dictatorships in Central America under Anastasio Somoza (who was, not insignificantly, pro-U.S.), and many of the Contras are former Somoza supporters.

Warped View

The Sandinistas, it is true, have been progressively curbing domestic freedoms, have alienated border minorities like the Miskito Indians and have acquired a disproportionate number of arms. But at least part of the explanation is the sustained and hostile pressure America has brought to bear on them. It has deliberately sought to isolate them and they are reacting by battenning down their hatches. Although they have the sympathy of other countries in the region, especially those states under the Contadora umbrella which have been trying to mediate a U.S.-Nicaragua settlement, the U.S. is not letting up in its campaign to bring them down. It is beyond comprehension how the Sandinistas can be called terrorists any more than the Contras can be described as freedom-fighters. Yet, in America's warped view of terrorists and terrorism, that is how it is.

What the expose of the arms-for-hostage trade-off has done is to destroy America's moralistic posture on global terrorism. It can be argued that this deal was honourably motivated in that it was an attempt, albeit covert, to get American citizens released. In fact, a few of them were realised as and when arms were delivered. But, on the other hand, it was a self-nugatory policy. To seek the release of hostages by rewarding their abductors (or those behind the abductors) is to encourage, not inhibit, the further taking of hostages. To make it public policy to have no truck with countries seen as founts of terrorism, while doing private deals with them, is to be hypocritical and deceitful, both with one's own people and the world. To make out that actually the deal was intended to win major political benefits for the U.S. by surreptitiously reopening channels of communication with a consistently and unremittingly hostile regime running a strategically crucial country is transparently to fudge the issue. And as it turns out, many more arms were supplied than the American president initially admitted, and the money earned on the deal through the country brokering the transaction, Israel, was clandestinely used to finance the Contras.

Not surprisingly, such American deviousness on combating global terrorism has confused and angered the Europeans. Not that they have been able to get their act together either, as shown by their disagreements over how or whether

maintain ties with Syria, which has been blamed for various terrorist actions in western Europe and Britain. But they are deeply perturbed by the onset of terrorism in their own countries by European terrorist groups like the Italian *prima linea* (first line) or the French *action directe* (direct action), which have already killed a few European corporate executives and carried out some other murderous acts.

What worries them now is that the exposure of America's secret dealings with Iran, even while the U.S. was urging them publicly to join it in fighting terrorism unitedly, followed by the deep embarrassment and confusion engulfing the Reagan administration now that its cover has blown, will seriously undermine not only western efforts to contain terrorism but also the west's moral position. That position could be said to have been secure so long as the west was seen manifestly to be the victim of foreign-inspired terrorism. But once the U.S., especially with its strike against Libya, decided to pin the blame on particular countries, even though the evidence against them was not, and perhaps in the nature of things could not have been, conclusive, the west's moral posture began to wobble.

For concerted economic, political or military action against "outlaw states charged with sustaining terrorism worldwide is not the same thing as fighting terrorist groups with ill-defined national affiliations. The latter is permissible, the former at least controversial because it entails infringing another nation's sovereignty. One has to recall the fierce domestic Egyptian reaction to America's hijacking of the Egyptian civilian plane carrying the *Achille Lauro* hijackers to realise how fighting terrorism, when it involves violating another country's dignity and rights, creates more problems than it solves. Again, Libya may have been a maverick state in many ways, but that did not justify the U.S. repudiating international law while claiming to have done so to uphold global law and order by punishing a "terrorist" leader.

Global Scourge

The moral position the west, especially the U.S., has assumed collapses when it is discovered that arms transactions and secret diplomatic negotiations have been pursued with the very states the west constantly fails against as fountainheads of global terrorism. That is what the Reagan administration has achieved with its messy dealings with Iran. And evidence coming out daily shows that it is not the U.S. alone which was dealing it but others too, like Britain.

Terrorism is a fact and it remains a global scourge. It must be fought by the world community acting in concert. But it cannot be fought by some countries assuming that they alone can define who terrorists are and what action, from the standpoint of their own narrow interests, should be taken against them.

Nor can those countries expect any longer to be taken seriously as leaders in the anti-terrorism campaign when it is discovered that they have been supping with the devil they have themselves publicly and repeatedly inveighed against.

THE caste battle-lines are being drawn in Andhra Pradesh and there is every indication of the outbreak of a caste conflict such as Gujarat has experienced and from which that state has yet to recover. No one can say for sure that the volcano of caste contention in Gujarat is extinct. Rather, it would seem to be dormant, awaiting some subterranean upheaval that would cause it to erupt anew and spew the lava of violence and strife. Were a caste war to begin in Andhra Pradesh, there is no guarantee that it would stay confined to the state. Gujarat might be affected, as might Karnataka and Assam.

In Karnataka, the Venkataswamy second backward classes commission, which has recommended an array of reservations at different levels, has set off a controversy by proposing the exclusion of several castes and communities, including the Vokkaligas, from the list of eligible classes. Four of the commission's members have resigned in protest at the exclusion of these groups "without identifying their class structure". They have attacked the commission's "macro approach" in gathering 400 castes and communities into 65 main castes on the ground that this would promote greater social injustice.

In Assam, 30 backward-class groups, including the scheduled castes and tribes, the OBCs (other backward classes), Nepali tea garden and ex-tea garden communities, have formed a council to mobilise the tribal and other "neglected" categories who have long suffered the domination of the upper castes in economic, political and all other spheres of activity. The Assam Gana Parishad government is already faced with an agitation in the Barak valley where the move to make Assamese a compulsory school subject has provoked a storm of non-Assamese protest. This has intensified the alienation of those represented by the United Minorities Front who view the AGP set-up as the opportunity for Assamese Hindus to settle scores with the minorities.

An All-India Brahmin Federation, set up some time ago, seeks the application of economic criteria when making reservations for the OBCs. Units in a number of states belong to the federation.

Deep Wounds

The severe caste clashes throughout the northern-belt states during the Janata period of central and state governance in 1977-79 have left deep wounds that have yet to heal and could start to bleed again under the slightest pressure.

What these developments add up to is that OBC reservations have become so socially divisive and explosive at the same time as being so convenient and effective an instrument of political populism, as to constitute a serious threat to the countervailing unifying forces at work. The entire social environment is changing for the worse, with the momentum towards unification that the independence movement generated and the early years of freedom sustained being not only arrested but even, to some degree, reserved.

It must be emphasised that this deterioration, to the point that caste affiliation is again becoming the main, if not the sole, determinant of identity in the competitive pursuit of all-too-scarce official benefits, is not the result of nearly four decades of reservations for the Harijans and tribals. The apportionment of quotas for them has occasioned growing resentment and the conflict and tension over OBC reservations has made the SCs and STs even more vulnerable to attack by those

who will set up reservations of all kinds with or without OBCs. An objective assessment informed by humanitarian compassion, SC and ST reservations have been justified from the beginning, have played an important role in making these groups upwardly mobile and will have to be continued until their conditions of existence have improved enough across the board to enable them to compete on more or less equal terms with their relatively more fortunate countrymen.

It is the onset of OBC reservations, first in the south and then spreading to the north, that has raised the spectre of a return to the atomistic, caste-and subcaste-bound fragmentation from which nationalism promised us release. Reservations for SCs and STs, in proportion to their members, amount to 15 per cent and 7½ per cent, respectively. In practice, especially ST reservations, quotas more often than not go unfilled. True, even so, reservations, for them have aroused controversy, but even if they were to fill their quotas, the balance of nearly 80 per cent would be available for general competition. It is OBC reservations that have tilted scales against open competitiveness and in favour of selection by caste.

Court Ruling

In Andhra Pradesh, the N.T. Rama Rao government has for opportunistic reasons raised OBC reservations from 25 per cent to 44 per cent by executive fiat. The Telugu Desam's dominance in the last four years has been mainly due to its success in stealing the OBC vote from the Congress; the latter party is, in turn, trying to regain it. Anxious to secure that vote NTR decided to implement the Muralidhara Rao commission's report four years after it had been submitted. This despite the present 25 per cent OBC quota not being filled in its entirety. There is, admittedly, a stipulation that only those earning less than Rs 12,000 a year will be eligible. But, as with the requirement everywhere that the caste status claimed be certified through an official document, such conditions prove no obstacle to intrepid claimants.

The worst damage the jacking-up of OBC reservations in Andhra Pradesh has done is to reduce the number of official jobs and seats in educational institutions available in open competition to 29 per cent, with 44 per cent for the OBCs, 21 for the SCs and STs and six for special categories. This is yet another instance of the supreme court ruling against total reservations exceeding 50 per cent of availability being honoured more in the breach than in the observance. It may be argued that, since the earlier 25 per cent quota for OBCs was not wholly filled, why should the hike to 44 per cent be criticised? Is it not a merely nominal concession? That is so for the moment.

But the number of officially recognised backward classes has gone up from 93 to 102, as recommended by the Muralidhara Rao commission. To this figure, NTR has added a further 44 communities, raising the total number of eligible groups to 146. So the list of potential beneficiaries has gone up considerably, and it is reasonable to suppose that the numbers of those actually coming forward will go up too. What is more, the Rao commission, apparently going by the Mandal commission report on OBCs nationwide, which puts the country's OBCs at 52 per cent of the population, has estimated the OBC population in Andhra Pradesh at 52 per cent of the total. This estimate has been questioned, but what is to prevent the NTR

extending reservations to 52 per cent? That would further agitate the number of claimants and reduce what is available in open competition.

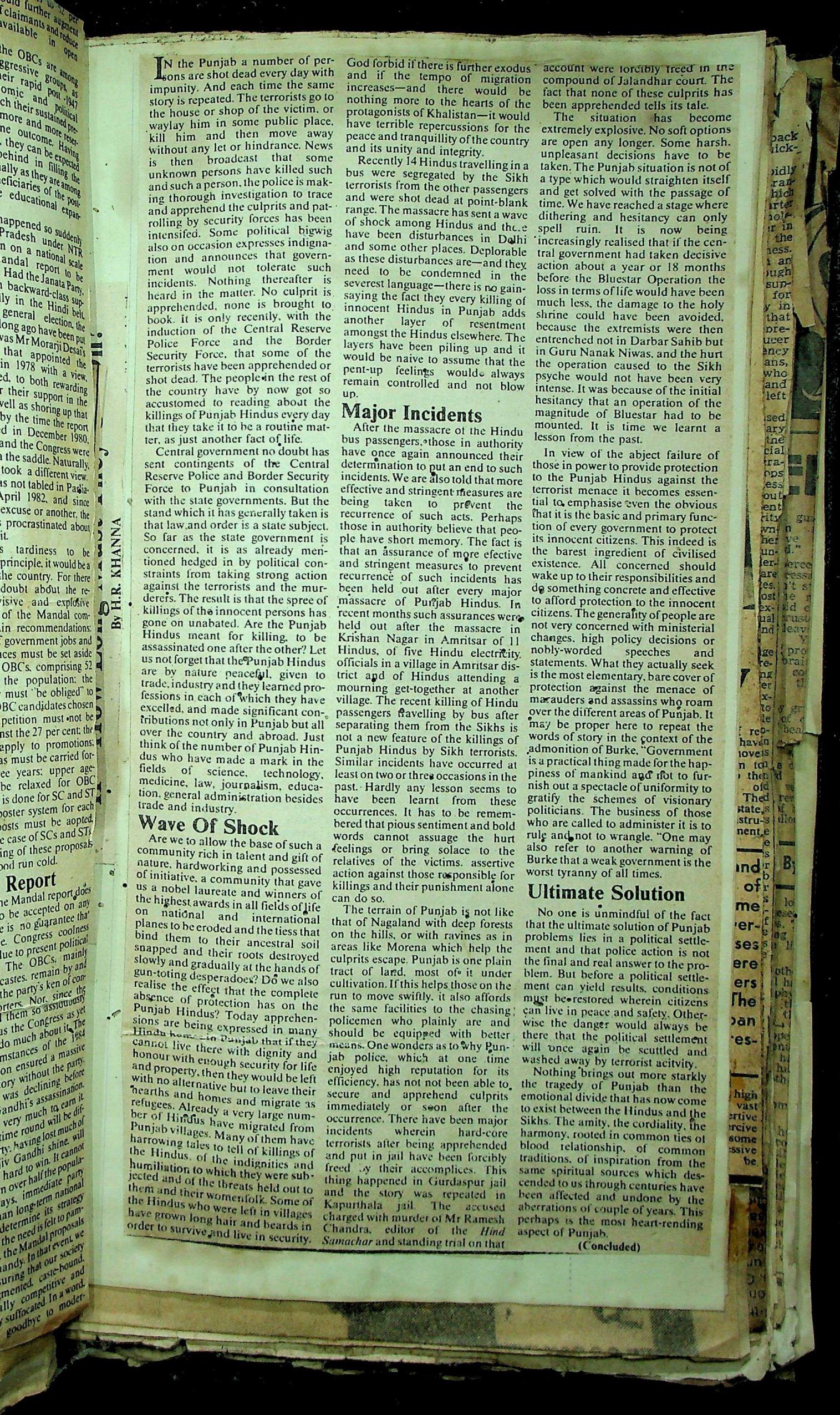
Secondly, the OBCs are among the more aggressive groups, as shown by their rapid post-1947 social, economic and political ascent, of which their sustained pressure to win more and more reservations is one outcome. Having secured them, they can be expected not to lag behind in filling the quotas, especially as they are among the chief beneficiaries of the post-independence educational expansion.

What has happened so suddenly in Andhra Pradesh under NTR would happen on a national scale were the Mandal report to be implemented. Had the Janata Party, dependent on backward-class support, especially in the Hindi belt, won the 1980 general election, the report would long ago have been put into effect. It was Mr Morarji Desai's government that appointed the commission in 1978 with a view, albeit unstated, to both rewarding the OBCs for their support in the 1977 poll as well as shoring up that support. But by the time the report was submitted in December 1980, Mrs Gandhi and the Congress were firmly back in the saddle. Naturally, the Congress took a different view. The report was not tabled in Parliament until April 1982, and since then, on one excuse or another, the Congress has procrastinated about dealing with it.

Were this tardiness to be motivated by principle, it would be a blessing for the country. For there can be no doubt about the repressive, divisive and explosive implications of the Mandal commission's main recommendations: 27 per cent of government jobs and university places must be set aside for the 3,743 OBCs, comprising 52 per cent of the population; the private sector must "be obliged" to do likewise; OBC candidates chosen in open competition must not be adjusted against the 27 per cent; the quota must apply to promotions; unfilled quotas must be carried forward for three years; upper age-limits must be relaxed for OBC candidates as is done for SC and ST ones; and a poster system for each category of posts must be adopted again as in the case of SCs and STs. The mere listing of these proposals makes the blood run cold.

Mandal Report

But while the Mandal report does not deserve to be accepted on any grounds, there is no guarantee that it will not be. Congress coolness towards it is due to present political calculations. The OBCs, mainly intermediate castes, remain by and large outside the party's ken of confirmed supporters. Nor, since the Janata woos them so assiduously in 1977-79, has the Congress as yet been able to do much about it. The special circumstances of the 1984 general election ensured a massive Congress victory without the party whose stock was declining before Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination. Having to do very much to earn it, the next time round will be different. The party, having lost much of the early Rajiv Gandhi shine, will have to strive hard to win. It cannot afford to spurn over half the population. As always, immediate party gain rather than long-term national benefit will determine its strategy and tactics. If the need is felt to propose per the OBCs, in that event, we would be ensuring that our society remains fragmented, caste-bound, antagonistically competitive and hierarchically suffocated. In a word, it would be goodbye to modernism.



In the Punjab a number of persons are shot dead every day with impunity. And each time the same story is repeated. The terrorists go to the house or shop of the victim, or waylay him in some public place, kill him and then move away without any let or hindrance. News is then broadcast that some unknown persons have killed such and such a person, the police is making thorough investigation to trace and apprehend the culprits and patrolling by security forces has been intensified. Some political bigwig also on occasion expresses indignation and announces that government would not tolerate such incidents. Nothing thereafter is heard in the matter. No culprit is apprehended, none is brought to book. It is only recently, with the induction of the Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force, that some of the terrorists have been apprehended or shot dead. The people in the rest of the country have by now got so accustomed to reading about the killings of Punjab Hindus every day that they take it to be a routine matter, as just another fact of life.

Central government no doubt has sent contingents of the Central Reserve Police and Border Security Force to Punjab in consultation with the state governments. But the stand which it has generally taken is that law and order is a state subject. So far as the state government is concerned, it is as already mentioned hedged in by political constraints from taking strong action against the terrorists and the murderers. The result is that the spree of killings of the innocent persons has gone on unabated. Are the Punjab Hindus meant for killing, to be assassinated one after the other? Let us not forget that the Punjab Hindus are by nature peaceful, given to trade, industry and they learned professions in each of which they have excelled, and made significant contributions not only in Punjab but all over the country and abroad. Just think of the number of Punjab Hindus who have made a mark in the fields of science, technology, medicine, law, journalism, education, general administration besides trade and industry.

Wave Of Shock

Are we to allow the base of such a community rich in talent and gift of nature, hardworking and possessed of initiative, a community that gave us a Nobel laureate and winners of the highest awards in all fields of life

on national and international planes to be eroded and the ties that bind them to their ancestral soil snapped and their roots destroyed slowly and gradually at the hands of gun-toting desperadoes? Do we also realise the effect that the complete absence of protection has on the Punjab Hindus? Today apprehensions are being expressed in many Hindu homes in Punjab that if they cannot live there with dignity and honour with enough security for life and property, then they would be left with no alternative but to leave their hearths and homes and migrate as refugees. Already a very large number of Hindus have migrated from Punjab villages. Many of them have harrowing tales to tell of killings of the Hindus, of the indignities and humiliation to which they were subjected and of the threats held out to them and their womenfolk. Some of the Hindus who were left in villages have grown long hair and beards in order to survive and live in security.

God forbid if there is further exodus and if the tempo of migration increases—and there would be nothing more to the hearts of the protagonists of Khalistan—it would have terrible repercussions for the peace and tranquillity of the country and its unity and integrity.

Recently 14 Hindus travelling in a bus were segregated by the Sikh terrorists from the other passengers and were shot dead at point-blank range. The massacre has sent a wave of shock among Hindus and they have been disturbances in Delhi and some other places. Deplorable as these disturbances are—and they need to be condemned in the severest language—there is no gainsaying the fact they every killing of innocent Hindus in Punjab adds another layer of resentment amongst the Hindus elsewhere. The layers have been piling up and it would be naive to assume that the pent-up feelings would always remain controlled and not blow up.

Major Incidents

After the massacre of the Hindu bus passengers, those in authority have once again announced their determination to put an end to such incidents. We are also told that more effective and stringent measures are being taken to prevent the recurrence of such acts. Perhaps those in authority believe that people have short memory. The fact is that an assurance of more effective and stringent measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents has been held out after every major massacre of Punjab Hindus. In recent months such assurances were held out after the massacre in Krishan Nagar in Amritsar of 11 Hindus, of five Hindu electricity officials in a village in Amritsar district and of Hindus attending a mourning get-together at another village. The recent killing of Hindu passengers travelling by bus after separating them from the Sikhs is not a new feature of the killings of Punjab Hindus by Sikh terrorists. Similar incidents have occurred at least on two or three occasions in the past. Hardly any lesson seems to have been learnt from these occurrences. It has to be remembered that pious sentiment and bold words cannot assuage the hurt feelings or bring solace to the relatives of the victims. assertive action against those responsible for killings and their punishment alone can do so.

The terrain of Punjab is not like that of Nagaland with deep forests on the hills, or with ravines as in areas like Morena which help the culprits escape. Punjab is one plain tract of land, most of it under cultivation. If this helps those on the run to move swiftly, it also affords the same facilities to the chasing policemen who plainly are and should be equipped with better means. One wonders as to why Punjab police, which at one time enjoyed high reputation for its efficiency, has not been able to secure and apprehend culprits immediately or soon after the occurrence. There have been major incidents wherein hard-core terrorists after being apprehended and put in jail have been forcibly freed by their accomplices. This thing happened in Gurdaspur jail and the story was repeated in Kapurthala jail. The accused charged with murder of Mr Ramesh Chandra, editor of the Hind Samachar and standing trial on that

account were forcibly freed in the compound of Jalandhar court. The fact that none of these culprits has been apprehended tells its tale.

The situation has become extremely explosive. No soft options are open any longer. Some harsh, unpleasant decisions have to be taken. The Punjab situation is not of a type which would straighten itself and get solved with the passage of time. We have reached a stage where dithering and hesitancy can only spell ruin. It is now being increasingly realised that if the central government had taken decisive action about a year or 18 months before the Blue Star Operation the loss in terms of life would have been much less, the damage to the holy shrine could have been avoided, because the extremists were then entrenched not in Darbar Sahib but in Guru Nanak Niwas, and the hurt the operation caused to the Sikh psyche would not have been very intense. It was because of the initial hesitancy that an operation of the magnitude of Blue Star had to be mounted. It is time we learnt a lesson from the past.

In view of the abject failure of those in power to provide protection to the Punjab Hindus against the terrorist menace it becomes essential to emphasise even the obvious that it is the basic and primary function of every government to protect its innocent citizens. This indeed is the barest ingredient of civilised existence. All concerned should wake up to their responsibilities and do something concrete and effective to afford protection to the innocent citizens. The generality of people are not very concerned with ministerial changes, high policy decisions or nobly-worded speeches and statements. What they actually seek is the most elementary, bare cover of protection against the menace of marauders and assassins who roam over the different areas of Punjab. It may be proper here to repeat the words of story in the context of the admonition of Burke, "Government is a practical thing made for the happiness of mankind and is not to furnish out a spectacle of uniformity to gratify the schemes of visionary politicians. The business of those who are called to administer it is to rule and not to wrangle." One may also refer to another warning of Burke that a weak government is the worst tyranny of all times.

Ultimate Solution

No one is unmindful of the fact that the ultimate solution of Punjab problems lies in a political settlement and that police action is not the final and real answer to the problem. But before a political settlement can yield results, conditions must be restored wherein citizens can live in peace and safety. Otherwise the danger would always be there that the political settlement will once again be scuttled and washed away by terrorist activity.

Nothing brings out more starkly the tragedy of Punjab than the emotional divide that has now come to exist between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The amity, the cordiality, the harmony, rooted in common ties of blood relationship, of common traditions, of inspiration from the same spiritual sources which descended to us through centuries have been affected and undone by the aberrations of couple of years. This perhaps is the most heart-rending aspect of Punjab.

(Concluded)

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As the excitement over Mr Gorbachov's landmark visit to this country has begun to subside, some details of the marathon talks between the two sides, including the 10-hour *tete-a-tete* between him and Mr Rajiv Gandhi, have begun to trickle out. These put into perspective the widespread satisfaction over the visit's outcome.

It is now superfluous to stress the profound impact the general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party has made on both his hosts and the Indian people at large. It has by now become part of the folklore surrounding Indo-Soviet friendship, as has the impressive array of Mr Gorbachov's qualities of head and heart which enabled him to make such a great impression. But the fact remains that these qualities would not have sufficed were it not for the Soviet leader's deep commitment to India whose non-aligned policy, present power and future potential are, in Soviet eyes, a major factor in the search for a world order free from nuclear weapons and providing "equal security to all".

Mr Gorbachov is not only a new type of Soviet leader, he is also the new leader of the Soviet Union, belonging to the younger generation. Compulsions for a close and friendly relationship between India and Soviet Union are strong enough on both sides to be unaffected by a change of leadership in either Moscow or New Delhi. But it is only understandable that a new Soviet leader should want to have a first-hand feel and experience of India.

During Mr Rajiv Gandhi's sojourn in Moscow last year a relationship of easy informality had been established between him and Mr Gorbachov. The Soviet leader's visit has consolidated these bonds of mutual friendship and trust.

Unlike in the past, the meeting of minds this time has not been confined to the leadership at the top. Mr Gorbachov brought with him the widest ever cross-section of Kremlin policy-makers. Of the six senior aides who had accompanied him to the Reykjavik summit with president Reagan, five were with him in New Delhi. All of them were involved in extensive and intensive conversations at appropriate levels.

Mutual Trust

Marshals of the Soviet Union have come to India in the past but only with the defence minister. By including the Soviet chief of general staff, Marshal Sergi Akhromeyev, in his entourage, Mr Gorbachov chalked up another first.

Security is the key element in Indo-Soviet relations and all of India's security concerns were discussed with Mr Gorbachov in the greatest detail. But, according to competent sources, this discussion was "not a cry of alarm". It was more a joint review by two friends of the worsening strategic environment in the region and the consequently growing security problems for either side or both.

For instance, the AWACS in Pakistan would be a matter of concern to the Soviet Union as well, not to India alone. The same goes for Pakistani bases or other military facilities for the U.S. The Soviet feelings about the Pakistani bomb in the basement were dramatically

By INDER MALHOTRA

displayed recently by the stern Soviet warning on the subject to general Zia-ul-Haq personally.

Yet another area of common concern is represented by the febrile situation in Iran, combined with the virulently unending Iran-Iraq war and the still unresolved Afghan problem. The dangers there were highlighted only the other day by president Reagan's attempted deal with the Ayatollahs which boomeranged so badly that even Teflon looks like being trashed once.

It is against this backdrop that a series of statements by the Soviet leader acquire significance. In his interview to the Indian media just before his arrival, he listed defence as one of the areas of Indo-Soviet co-operation. More explicit were his speeches to the two houses of Parliament and the Friends of the Soviet Union. During these talks, he voiced his country's commitment to, and stakes in, India's unity, territorial integrity and security. He was emphatic also in his assurances that improvement in Soviet-Chinese relations would never be at the cost of India's real interests.

Common Concern

Only three months ago, the 15th anniversary of the Indo-Soviet treaty had gone unnoticed. The importance now attached to it is a measure of the change in the situation even in so short an interval. Not only is the treaty mentioned in the joint statement issued at the end of the visit but Mr Gorbachov's reference to it during his Parliament speech could not have been clearer or more significant. He has spoken of the treaty having coped with "complicated situations" in the past and being capable of dealing with similar situations in future. Mr Rajiv Gandhi's own remarks about the treaty, during his banquet speech, were equally warm.

In the private parleys on the subject there are reported to have been two important and complementary strands: India's sturdy confidence in its ability to meet the threats to its security; and the Soviet Union's sincere offer to fill whatever gaps there might be in Indian weaponry. The emphasis in the connection was on India, rather than the Soviet Union, being the judge of what needed to be done. Marshal Akhromeyev's talks with Mr Arun Singh and the military top brass took care of the details while the principals concentrated on the broad picture.

To cavil then at Mr Gorbachov's non-committal answers at the joint press conference to questions on Pakistan and China would be to draw a red-herring across the trail. In public, he could not have spoken otherwise even if the questions were not as unfortunately worded as they were.

The economic agreement signed during the Gorbachov visit is stupendous in both scope and scale though it does this country no credit at all that it should seek from Russia rupee resources. Since 1978 when the current rupee-rouble exchange rate was established, the value of the Indian rupee in relation to the dollar has gone down. Even so, the Soviet Union has agreed not to press for an immediate revision of the exchange rate.

A source of even greater cheer to both sides must be what Mr Rajiv

Gandhi has called the agreement to give a "qualitative new thrust" to co-operation with the Soviet Union in science and technology. The Soviet offer of an international space centre is a bonanza the full import of which has yet to sink in. This is so because while all other elements in the various Indo-Soviet accords had been elaborately worked out much in advance, this particular announcement by Mr Gorbachov came as a total surprise.

Details will, of course, be worked out when the chairman of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, academician Yuri Marchuk, arrives here. But it is clear that the proposed space station will be comparable only to the one at Vaikanour in the Soviet Union and the Kennedy space center at Cape Canaveral. Of course, the Soviet Union has an interest in being able to participate in space research close to the Equator. But the benefits accruing to India, including spin-offs in laser, micro-electronic, computer and genetic engineering technologies, would be invaluable.

The Delhi declaration signed by Mr Rajiv Gandhi and Mr Gorbachov personally is a unique document. Six of the ten points enunciated in the declaration pertain to the nuclearmenace. The Soviet Union's acceptance of the Indian proposal for an international convention banning the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a feather in this country's cap. Moreover, Mr Gorbachov must be the first ruler of a communist state to depart from Marxist orthodoxy and talk of humanitarian principles, human rights and even non-violence as a basis of community life!

Evidently, the Soviet leader was here also to make an assessment of India stability amidst myriad internal challenges, some of them extremely serious. The conclusions he has come to were reflected at least partly in his discussions with the delegations of the two communist parties of this country. . .

Delhi Declaration

Interestingly, despite their slanging match with him over the Gorkhaland agitation, the CPI (M) leaders spoke of Mr Gandhi to Mr Gorbachov positively than did the CPI chief, Mr Rajeswara Rao. Indeed, Mr Rao is reported to have stated at some length that the Prime Minister had surrounded himself with wrong advisers, adopted wrong policies and got into difficulties. From all accounts, Mr Gorbachov, while gently disputing this assessment, emphasised the importance to India and the world of the extremely positive policies Mr Rajiv Gandhi's government has been following in relation to peace.

Conspicuously absent from the vast outpouring of words, written and spoken, is any reference to the long-standing Soviet offer of nuclear power reactors to this country. During the preparatory discussions in Moscow it was quickly agreed that silence on the subject would be the best policy. The Soviet offer has neither been rejected nor withdrawn. Technically, it is still "under consideration". But there is, as there should be, strong opposition among some of the policy makers at least to importing nuclear power reactors from anywhere.

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In search of a new

poor and struggling. In fact the first one, the upper crust, has increased during the past three decades of planned development. Today it lives in a self-contained world. In the past the upper crust was much smaller and the economy more traditional. Even the rich and the powerful were surrounded by the poor; they had to deal and live with the latter. The upper strata depended upon the lower ones for services and commodities; they had to ensure that the latter survived in a serviceable condition.

Today the economic link between the high and the low has snapped to a considerable extent but more so psychologically and morally. The rich can now afford to ignore the poor. The level of affluence has risen to a point where the well-to-do can give middle class status to their domestic servants and personal help. However, mechanical devices and domestic gadgets have supplanted domestic servants that were needed for menial jobs.

The alienation of the upper classes from the grassroots of Indian society has some other objective causes. One of these is the fact that the affairs of the country have reached a degree of complexity where they are no longer easy to grasp and far less to manage. If a leader finds that

there is no simple way to maintain peace and order in different parts of the country, it is almost natural for him to shift his attention to other matters, such as organising international conferences, that are more manageable. Similar considerations apply to public administrators and businessmen.

reality. A large number of regional parties and groups have proliferated; many religious movements and leaders have risen to prominence. All these add to the complexity and confusion of public life in the country. Then the coercive apparatus of the state, which is the most reliable instrument available to the government,

The growing estrangement between the elite and the masses in India has created a vacuum of leadership. A similar situation had arisen in some other countries in the past, e.g. Italy and Germany, with disastrous consequences. The masses that felt themselves forsaken by the elite were reduced by pathological charismatic leaders such as Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. The masses have again slipped from the frying pan of elitist rule into the fire of fanatically-regressive regimes.

The malaise spreads to intellectuals as well, for they retreat into their specialities (including that of making easy generalisations), rather than making the effort to come to grips with and to articulate the increasingly complex

continues to work at a fairly high level of efficiency. But in a vast and increasingly self-assertive society, the efficacy of coercive power has its limits. In some parts of the country, its excessive use is already proving to be

tions or status or prestige of

leaders must not stand in the
No government leader or
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prevailing feudal patriarchal
ethos in India discourages self-

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proach. It should not be too
difficult to initiate moves in this
direction, considering the large
numbers of men and women of
goodwill and intelligence who
inhabit India.

A Thought for The Week

Reason may be the lever, but sentiment gives you the fulcrum and the place to stand on if you want to move the world.

— OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Old Order Is Dead...

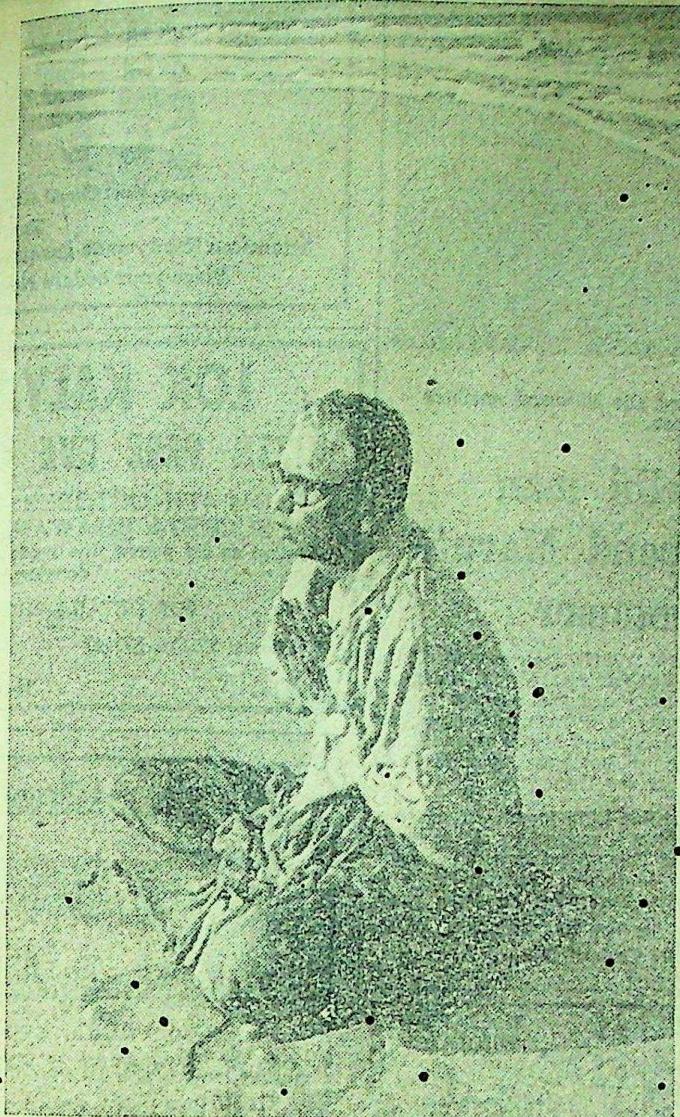
While the old order is dead, the new refuses to be born. This used to be a common refrain in speeches and debates in the thirties and the forties. One hardly hears this formulation these days. This is rather surprising. The old order was not dead or even dying in the thirties and the forties; it is now. If the British were then getting ready to leave, the Indian National Congress was there to step into their place; and the general expectation was that most other things would go on more or less as well or as badly as before. And they did. It was, of course, supercilious to describe Nehru as the last British Viceroy of India. But basically his approach conformed to British standards of public life. He introduced the concept of planning and took measures, on the one hand, to step up the rate of economic growth and, on the other, to reduce income disparities. But essentially he was not out to disrupt the existing economic and social order. In any case, the order had enough strength and resilience to adjust to new pressures. Today it is a different story. The old order is in trouble and, as far as we can see, there is nothing ready to take its place.

It is a commonplace that the Congress (or what passes under that name) is a shambles; that it is staying on in office just because Mrs. Gandhi is still around; that the institutional framework which we inherited from the British and expanded on our own is in decline in terms of both efficiency and integrity; that instead of narrowing down, economic disparities have widened; that 40 per cent of the people live in abject poverty; that even those who have done well out of the system are thoroughly dissatisfied with it; that old social norms no longer command the loyalty of the youth at least in large urban centres; that the generation gap is becoming a reality in our country as well; that however eloquently some of us might talk of our glorious heritage, it has little relevance to the aspirations and behaviour pattern of millions of us; and that it is these restless and mobile millions who are setting the pace for the rest of us. We can go on piling evidence to show that the old order is in fact dying. But it should hardly be necessary.

Let us now look at the other side of the problem. No political party or alliance is ready to step into the place the Congress is vacating; there is no political leader who can claim to command one-half of Mrs. Gandhi's support or skill or daring or grasp of central issues; we cannot even think of a new administrative-judicial-educational-institutional framework better suited to meet our needs; while social conflicts are becoming more and more intense as the process of modernisation gathers momentum and disparities increase; there is no prospect of a revolutionary change. All in all, a new order is nowhere on the horizon.

In a sense, not one but several revolutions are taking place in the country — an economic revolution symbolised by the rise of a vast entrepreneurial class and an equally vast technology in urban centres, and of progressive farmers in the countryside; and a social revolution symbolised by the secular character of the republic, the increasing assertiveness of the upcoming castes, traditionally low in the Hindu scheme; the revolt of the youth against parental authority, the massive movement from rural areas to towns and cities where the pull of tradition is much weaker, the rapid expansion of modern education and decline of religious education and so on. One day all these developments might well add up to produce a new order. But that is a long time away. Meanwhile the more sensitive among us feel helpless, if not personally trapped. We crave for order, development and social change towards greater social justice at the same time and when we do not get them, as we do not, we ape either into depression, or self-righteousness (condemnation of others which has become a universal disease in India), or into some form of epicureanism.

Fullness Of The Void



THE UNPOLLUTED SPACES OF THE MIND: Nothing can empty the mind but the mind itself. Photo: Dinesh Bellare.

This is true of the human brain too, a machine with a difference. Modern man has made himself a total stranger to relaxation. The use of drugs has proved to be a faux pas. True, the active sympathetic and the passive parasympathetic systems tend to balance each other. As for the chanting of mantras, japa, it can easily become monotonous and monotony breeds neurosis. The observation of breathing and breathing exercises can be a booster. Another method, which Mehta recommends, is to prevent sensations from turning into thoughts. He calls it, a la Krishnamurti, awareness without attention. Of course it is easier said than done.

Brain relaxation is a prelude to brain potential. All forms of energy are but forms of the same cosmic energy. So one inevitably stumbles on kundalini, its blend of masculine and feminine components, the union of Siva-Shakti. Using an analogy, Mehta confesses his preference for fusion rather than fission. Is the analogy a concession to science or a valid equation?

To activate the hidden energy, the aspirant is advised to be happy, joyous would be a better word. This is a sound advice: an air of joy and festivity is a better conductor than gloomy austerity, habit mechanism and violence.

As for the senses, these are certainly more than five. For the best results in sensitivity training, desire has to be wholly eschewed. The highest enjoyment is without attachment. Memory and imagination can be strong aids in recharging the system and giving it

into trouble is our genius and glory as a species! When the two brains are made to work together a new power arises, the mana of fusion shall we say? Order avoids tension, it also creates space in terms of its arrangement. Recently Solzhenitsyn had spoken of the human need for unpolluted spaces of the mind. A simple way of ordering life and thought is the way of review, what Wordsworth had called recollection in tranquillity. How will the ordered, restructured, revitalised brain work in the world outside so full of disorder? How will the two communicate?

Among the modern world's paradoxes is that while the media have multiplied, communication between groups and individuals has declined, if not disappeared. How to be a person no one knows. The great are always lonely. The communication gap is a cliché.

The Science Of Meditation : By Rohit Mehta (Motilal Banarsi Dass, price not stated)

But in an ideal state, too ideal to be real as yet, the dual and the non-dual, the past and the present, communion and communication, will come together. Such a wholinguia we do not yet have. As it is, our conditioned, habit-dominated mind is a slave to the past tense. How to free the slave mind?

Here Mehta brings in a new point. The mind speaks in the language of images. The nervous system cannot tell the difference between an actual experience and something imagined vividly and in detail. This has interesting

ditation is the idea or image, a strong visualisation. Here one notices a bifurcation: while some images modify the behaviour pattern, others turn into symbols. Meditation is not for the lazy and the insensitive and calls for a strong sensorial, experiential base. One must be able to imagine greatly, even perhaps what seems to be impossible. Is not today's impossible tomorrow's actual?

Thanks to his unconquerable mind, man alone is capable of a conscious evolution. But moved by the contrary passion for security and adventure, for routine and freedom, progress is hampered. It is only when the image or experience is living and fresh that the mind moves forward. A kind of openness to the new, a modified continuity is needed to keep the channels moving.

A New Synthesis

But modification is not transformation. The conditioned mind can create forms, but the content must come from beyond the mind. Mehta's argument is not averse to the occult. Factors not only from below but from above are evoked. No evolution without involution. The Darwinian account is right so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Man is a new synthesis, he makes himself. Mutation, Patanjali had pointed out long ago, is caused by an overflow of nature. In dealing with man the question of consciousness cannot be brushed aside. Somehow, somewhere along the line there has to be a leap, an emptying, as the mystics call it.

Meditation is not merely a closing of the eyes, a fixed posture, the repeating of mantras or puja or deep-thinking. These are accessories, not essential. A serendipity, meditation is an observation of thought processes. The Mouni Sadhu's definition is perhaps better than any: the ability to maintain unwaveringly your awareness on a chosen theme for so long as you decide to continue with the same. But we have not only to hold the mind but, in the end, to exceed it. The Vedas and Upanishads speak of the two kindred birds, watching and participating: one eating the fruit, the other watching. The technique of meditation was further elaborated by the Buddhists, expert mind-watchers.

Nothing can empty the mind but itself. Paradox pursues us. This was the pith of Bodhidharma's answer to the Chinese emperor and Lao-tzu's reiteration of the "empty innermost", "the mind-space". The absence of such awareness of "the fullness of the void" condemns the various, violent efforts at external change, the toy revolutions of the mechanical mind, as exercises in futility. Man has to be saved from

himself. The missing link has to find out what is missing.

It is only when the false self-view has been replaced by the true, when swarupa and swadharma have returned, the symbols resurrected, that we move towards the liberating silence, at once static and dynamic, ready to be whole. This self-actualisation is what Fritjof Schuon has called an esoteric nucleus and Mehta calls the third eye, without which civilization is never safe. This is our major deficiency need, that we have forgotten the secret of the asana, how to contemplate,

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first time someone is talking of the need for a renaissance in India. This has been going on for some time. We imagined that the renaissance was a widespread belief being that the British imposed one. Even now not many of us realise that our own, though it cannot be denied that the West stirred Indian society and released new forces, the Renaissance meant revival of the pre-Roman civilization with its emphasis on secular exploration. In India there was no such tradition rediscovered and restored to its legitimate place. It is highly significant that the Brahmo Samaj, of the so-called Indian renaissance, was primarily religious issues. It sought to synthesise certain features of Christianity. Equally significant, it did so along the three well-known Hindu lines — *Jnana* (knowledge), *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Renunciation*. The other reform movements, which arose in South and North India, took a similar religious form, the most important of them, trying to restore the Vedas.

Under Nehru's influence we have sought to run economic and social life in independent India on a disregard of the obvious fact that the Indian society is oriented towards religion. The compulsions of India is a multi-religious country. As such one of them to the status of a state religion, the country was partitioned on the basis of religion, a non-Muslim minority (over 10 per cent of the total) stayed on. This minority needed to be reassured to receive a fair deal and to be accommodated within an equitable basis if it was not to be alienated. This could be done only by emphasising the secular nature of polity and de-emphasising the religious divisions. Also implicit in the thinking of the better educated has been the belief that society had become non-and-ritual-ridden and that it was necessary to do all that with the help of modern rationality and order that we take our legitimate place in the world, develop what Nehru called the scientific temper. This policy has produced results. Even if communalism has been eradicated and communal riots continue to take place, communalism has been denied legitimacy and therefore a great deal of its virulence and power. Science and technology have also developed in the country. Our scientists are not yet sufficiently creative. But they are taking care of a great deal of the country's needs. But in this we have neglected our roots and produced an elite ignorant of the past and only superficially Westernised. Creating havoc in the shape of the near collapse of public and professional morality is there for anyone to see. We have lost our identity. Something of Mother India, as she is, sticks to all of us. Indeed, our identity is too strong to be shaken. But our minds can be confused and they have been confused. What we call the crisis of character is in fact a crisis of values which we are not able to sort out. But in no obvious way out. We have to keep struggling till our religious mentality purged of the debilitating influences of narrowness comes into play and is able to cope with the modern world.

Preponderance of one dimension implies the other. In other words, the intensity of being powerful, there is little scope for rituals, celebrations etc. On the other hand, the cultural dimensions, the belief is possibly weakened, the inter-relationship is static but dynamic. In case of the faith may provide energy for the activities.

Spring Of Faith

In that wants to maintain intensity and purity of the followers would be rituals, ceremonies. But it is interesting to note that the rise of a pure religion like Islam, produced a renaissance, for intellectual-cultural manifestivity is less ritualistic, more "cultural" than the appropriate to study the relation between the faith and directly and indirectly the relation of faith and material-cultural manifestations.

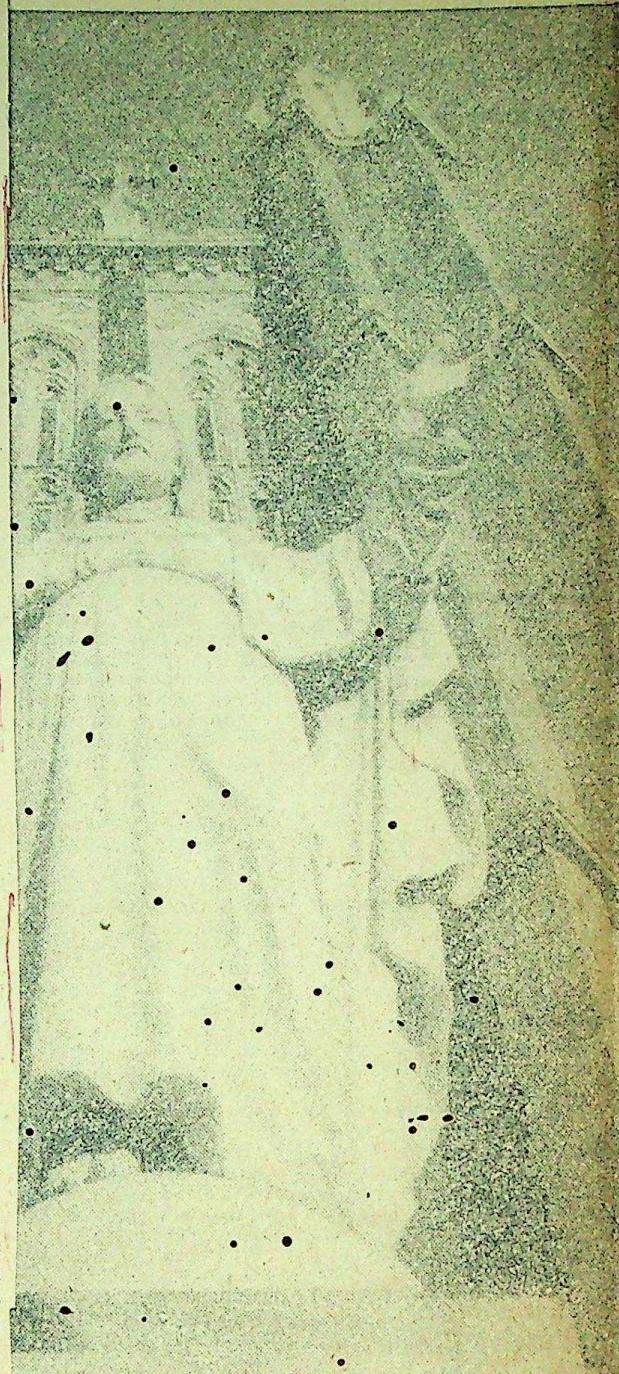
In other words, a new faith would arise in a clash with the existing culture where it is either relatively weak or where it has become effete through over-development. In other words, the country where the faith first arose, prescribes a new way of living, a new pattern of social

religious beliefs. would be one such instance.

But there is also the other side of the picture. It relates to the condition of material culture at the time when a given religion arises in the history of a people or of a region, or when it is introduced into or imposed upon it. The state of culture (confined here for the sake of argument to activities such as dramas and plays, dancing, painting, social gatherings, singing etc.) at the time of the rise of the faith will have a deep influence upon it. The state of the culture may range from the extreme where it is very weak and the cultural landscape is virtually barren, to where it is particularly vigorous. At the other end, it may be overdeveloped but effete. It seems that a new religious faith is likely to arise at a time when the cultural landscape is rather barren and empty or when the culture has become old and effete.

In other words, a new faith would arise in a clash with the existing culture where it is either relatively weak or where it has become effete through over-development. In other words, the country where the faith first arose, prescribes a new way of living, a new pattern of social

or a cultural renaissance



Deeper into the ecology of religion."

expression, going to the extreme of discouraging or banning, directly or indirectly, cultural sessions of the faith, or even cultural activities in general. One must develop a typology of religious faiths along this line. The analysis suggests that India may have developed, because of historical circumstances, a peculiar rhythm of interaction between religion and culture. If it is necessary for the vigour of faith and belief that the culture should be static if not effete, the appropriate relationship may be institutionalised around the cults of detachment and asceticism. Because the "spiritual" energy does not flow into and yield enrichment of the material culture, it follows that the nature of the religious experience also will not evolve — because the evolution would in its turn challenge the existing material culture. Rather, there is regression of religious experience into mysticism, fanaticism, etc., and of culture into forms of ritualisation alienated from the intellectual and scientific or aesthetic and technical spheres.

Chaos Of The Times

Considering all this, it is not surprising that studies of any given faith generally begin with an analysis of the social, political, cultural and religious situation prevailing in the part of the country where the faith first arose. Thus, it is said of some reli-

gions that "chaos of the times called for a simple religious faith that could be understood and put to work by the common man." But we need to go deeper into the ecology of religions. There is always a particular geographical location with its distinctive characteristics and specific historical peculiarities. For instance, Punjab has ever been the gateway to India — the frontier area where people, empires and civilisations have clashed one with another. That era is not at an end as yet and new confrontations and crises loom ahead of us, bringing to our minds an intimate awareness of the circumstances in which new faiths arose there in the past.

In examining the interaction between religion and culture in India — not merely any one faith but religions — generally — one may develop the theme meaningfully by referring to this framework of dialectics of beauty and duty. It is important to compare well as the different parts of India as across our political frontiers, including Afghanistan, Iran etc. Who may divide India into distinctive cultural zones. Thus, we notice the vigour of the highly ritualised cultural life of plays, drama, dancing, festivals, including religious celebrations — in southern India. Culture with a slightly more intellectual orientation is visible in the Bengal area and to a certain extent in Gujarat and Maharashtra. In north-western

India, the greatest concentration of human and of social effort has been on two activities, namely the economic and the military. Political and social insecurity that have characterised this part of India in the past, and which one senses even today, have necessitated a militant, aggressive, power-oriented outlook. Speaking socio-historically, north-western India has had little time to relax and to develop elaborate and sophisticated plays or rituals such as those in Kerala, or intricate dances that come from the south like Bharat Natyam, Kathakali etc., or the elaborate rituals and ceremonies that one sees even today in the temples in some parts of the country. The dynamism of social history in the northwest has hampered the growth of that cultural richness, variety, sophistication and even autonomy of cultural activities that we witness in other parts of the country as well as in some other countries e.g., Germany. However, in India a dynamic historical interaction between culture and religion or philosophy has not developed anywhere.

Cultural Landscape

For instance, culture as it existed in northern India at the time of the rise of new faiths was largely decadent and empty. From the persistence of this situation, which has continued with some variations to our own day, we may draw some conclusions.

In the first place, the social and creative energies of the people have had to find a largely non-secular expression. The cultural landscape in northern India may have been influenced by the fact that for some countries preceding the rise of Bhakti movements, such as that of Sant Kabir, the country was under the domination of invaders from Central Asia. These were themselves weak in terms of their cultural wealth.

In fact, one reason why the north-west may have been unable to develop the richness and vigour of religious cultural life is that one finds in the south is the circumstance that it was continuously over-run by tribes and nomads from impoverished areas of Central Asia. Thus, the religions that have grown up in the north-west have had certain specific common characteristics.

In the first place, the intensity of the faith had to be powerful, indeed monolithic, in order to make an impression upon the people who were themselves periodically in need of hard work for their survival as well as for defence and protection against hostile intruders, both internal and external.

In other words, the faith must make some clear and strong points and should not be too subtle or elaborate.

The other point that we notice in religion to the role of religion in India is that faith has had to make up for weakness of the secular culture. In other words, given the relatively limited possibilities for the development of a rich and variegated range of technological as well as aesthetic activities, religious faith and imagination played their role as far as possible. This highlights the dilemma that confronts any faith which strikes roots in India, especially the north. Whether it be Islam, Sikhism, Arya Samaj or any other faith, it can grow or expand only so long as it remains relatively pure and simple. But at the same time, it must play a role that secures certain places in other countries of the world.

A Parallel Dilemma

A parallel dilemma confronts the faiths in dealing with the problems of security and survival in an essentially unstable historical environment. For instance, the faith must provide the basis and the inspiration for military security but, at the same time, the pursuit of beauty is the need of the day.

it runs into the danger of being absorbed by the press needs for a defence organisation and preparedness. These dilemmas could conceivably be met by social differentiation in which the members of the religious community split themselves into separate segments, as in the caste system, where each group takes up a distinctive role. However, is inevitable, nevertheless it cannot proceed too far without disrupting the basic unity and strength of the faith.

In answering the question about the role of religion in Indian culture it is important to analyse how, under the impact of the religious faiths, certain types of social and cultural activities have, in fact, proliferated in India. Much of the energy and enterprise in north India has gone into educational developments, such as education, engineering, farming and, of course, migration of the people to all parts of India and many countries abroad. In short, the ethos of Punjab and the neighbouring areas does not easily lend support to autonomous cultural developments, except in some limited spheres. There are few theatre or dance groups independent of religious organisations. Such activities may be carried out in a marginal or subordinate fashion but not as primary ones. In other words there is stubborn reluctance to accept cultural activities that may have an autonomous value or that may be self-justified. This applies to artisanship also, for the low social status of the artisans prevents them from contributing to an indigenous industrial revolution, as did their counterparts in the western countries.

Historical Experience

Autonomous cultural activities act as a mirror in which the community reflects upon its experience and thereby develops continuously. In societies where the secular culture is active and powerful, there is a continuous re-enacting of the social and historical experiences in art and culture. It might be true to say that the historical experiences of societies are presented and preserved mainly in the form of art and literature, music, etc. Here it is significant to note that in India the historical experiences are preserved and presented mainly in the religious ideas and institutions. This indicates how central religion continues to be in the social and cultural lives of the people.

Given the situation in India, where religious consciousness plays a determining role, what does the future hold? On the one hand, there is some growth of economic prosperity and of wealth. This is also true of many Indians who have settled in other countries. Some of them have been successful professionally and materially. The question is where and in what direction are they to invest their surplus resources and human capabilities. Given the background we have outlined here, it is not surprising that the investment of resources tends to go into religious activities and organisations. However, beyond a certain point the material expansion of religious organisations would lead to the very kind of hypertrophy to which the question of the role of religion in the development of culture in India presents.

India presents some extremely difficult situations that demand human and material resources and energy to largely to worldly ends. A secular culture that would provide constructive outlet has not developed. There is an immediate need for a cultural renaissance in India. A synthesis of the path of duty and pursuit of beauty is the need of the day.

No Apologies, Please

MR. JAIN'S article is a beautiful piece of apology on behalf of the Prime Minister. I feel your statement, "to a large extent Mrs. Gandhi is a victim of circumstances beyond her control", is not correct.

In the 1969 split, Mrs. Gandhi was not the victim, but she was the one who came on top. Every sane person was shocked to see the Prime Minister defeating her own party's presidential candidate.

You state that almost all the present chief ministers are hand-picked by Sanjay (do you really want us to believe that?). Who brought Bhosale in place of Antulay? Who changed the chief minister of Andhra four times in the last two years? Who asked Pahadia to step down? You want us to believe that a situation in which Gundu Raos, Bhanjanlals and Jagannath Mishras flourish is not of Mrs. Gandhi's creation. When the Prime Minister tells us that she has not read the press bill, and she is neither for nor against the bill, should we believe that circumstances beyond her control are forcing her to talk like that?

Remember chief ministers of the status of D. P. Mishra, Y. B. Chavan, Kamaraj, Morarji Desai, Govind Vallabh Pant, B. C. Roy Hanmantayya, C. Rajagopalachari. Where are such men today? Why is it that men of any stature cannot occupy positions of authority? Is it because Mrs. Gandhi is helpless? Please tell us why every state chief minister has to visit Delhi every third day. Is it because they are trying to take courage to fight the hopeless situation in their states from Mrs. Gandhi who is the victim of a very cruel fate?

P. JOSHUA
Pune

I wonder why a hue and cry has been raised over Maneka Gandhi's separation from her mother-in-law and her decision to enter politics. This is not of any importance to the nation. Mrs. Maneka Gandhi's separation from Mrs. Indira Gandhi is their domestic affair. Her entry into politics and the formation of a new party are not going to affect the nation seriously in any way. In the Western democratic countries such an event would have gone unnoticed.

V. D. MAHAJAN
Pune

MR. Girilal Jain does not present a balanced picture of Mrs. Gandhi. He says Mrs. Gandhi is a victim of circumstances beyond her control in that she was forced to split the Congress in 1969 and declare emergency in 1975. While the former is to a certain extent true, the clamping of emergency was a device she used to prevent being de-throned. It would be patently wrong to suggest that Jayaprakash Narayan and Justice Sinha drove her into a corner and that the only option open to her then was the overthrow of the Constitution.

Mr. Jain states that Antulay was a Sanjay nominee, but can it be said that Antulay's shenanigans were not known to Mrs. Gandhi? Antulay's caprice was derived out of his closeness to Mrs. Gandhi. Surely, Mr. Jain does not believe that Jagannath Mishra had the temerity to give birth to the Bihar Press Bill without Mrs. Gandhi's blessings. Such examples can be multiplied. The Congress (I), if it can be called a party at all, is a monolithic party where Mrs. Gandhi rules supreme and nothing happens without her knowledge. Therefore, when in that party, the lieutenants make mistakes, the leader is to be held fully responsible for them.

NARAYAN PRABHU
• Bombay

MR. JAIN'S article rightly points out to both Mrs. Gandhi's inability and incapacity to get rid of the unwanted elements around her in recent years. I have been an admirer of Mrs. Gandhi, although I don't belong to her party or any other. The iron-willed lady of the past now seems unable to tackle the problems she faces even within her party.

This can easily be seen in the recent cabinet expansion at the centre as well as in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and so on. Earlier she discouraged dissidents in such a manner that no one was ever able to create any trouble. These days she tries to pacify them by making them ministers. Soon each state will have to create as many cabinet posts as the number of ruling party M.L.A.s in the legislature.

SAPNA KURIAN
Jamnagar

Netaji Rediscovered

THIS refers to the review of Milan Hauner's book India in Axis Strategy by Govind Talwalkar, "Netaji among the Nazis" (October 10).

Under the cover of research, Mr. Hauner has merely collected material to suit the usual British habit of defaming those who opposed them. His quotations of Hitler's views are obviously intended to make Netaji appear either a political fool or an opportunist.

Whatever may have happened in the past — not that Mr. Hauner's statements about Hitler can be taken for granted — the fact is that Netaji, soon after his arrival in Berlin in 1941, was accorded the status of the head of a free state. He was permitted to build an Indian army unit, his office had the status of the diplomatic representation and he was allowed to have broadcasting facilities without any kind of pre-or post-sponsorship. How then does Mr. Hauner, who is supposed to have done research, arrive at the conclusion that the attempts to form an Indian Legion were a failure? Out of roughly 8,500 Indian P.O.W.s, who were in

German camps, some 3,400 had joined the Legion.

He also refers to a report of Indian soldiers having indulged in murder, arson and rape. In which army in the world have such incidents not taken place? The fact is that the Indian soldiers of the Legion, despite the great mental disappointment that they could not fight the British, the purpose for which they were recruited, remained a disciplined body right till the end. Even during the last days of the war, they faithfully adhered to the directive given by Netaji that they were to use their arms against the British only. When, while withdrawing from Bordeaux (Bay of Biscay) they were attacked by the Maquis (French resistance) as they used minimum force as defence and managed to reach Germany without any further skirmishes. Mr. Hauner is also wrong about the I.N.A. in the East.

There was no question of Netaji trying to woo the Japanese, after the fall of Singapore (February 1942), to raise an army. The I.N.A. had already come into existence in January 1942 under the command of Capt. Mohan Singh and had reached a strength of about 65,000 by the time Netaji reached East Asia in June 1943.

Mr. Hauner is not right in saying that Netaji was able to see Ribbentrop only after great difficulty and that the former was frustrated because Hitler refused to see him. Ribbentrop received Netaji for the first time within four weeks of his arrival in Berlin. About the same time Hitler appointed one Mr. Wilhelm Keppeler, a close confidante of his, as a special liaison officer to maintain direct contact with Netaji. Netaji was interested in the work being done and not in seeking Hitler's blessings. Since his plans, which re-

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A Thought for The Week

"One should be disentangled as much as possible from one's fine feelings, on one's authority and metaphysics, and made to rest in life." — GEORGE SANTAYANA

Living In The Past

If Islamic fundamentalism establishes any point, it is that of Muslims find the pull of the past difficult to resist. This true in countries where they constitute an overwhelming majority or even the total population as in those where they are a minority. In India the pull of the past is reinforced by memories of the Moghul rule, with the remarkable Moghul monuments such as the Taj and Fatehpur Sikri serving as reminders of the glory that was Islam in that period. A number of Indian Muslims have made this point and contrasted it with the preconditions of Indian Muslims. But this is only partial in historical (as distinct from psychological) terms. A majority of Muslims were converts from Hinduism and economic condition was not very much better than that comparable Hindu groups. Three points can be made with confidence in this regard. First, the ruling aristocracy, mostly from central Asia, including Afghanistan, or from Iran, did not care much for local Muslims. If anything, they were more keen to forge alliances with warrior Hindus such as the Rajputs and the Marathas than to promote well-being of the faithful. Secondly, certain Hindu castes continued to dominate the country's economic life—trade, including foreign trade, manufacture and banking. Finally, while Hindu caste groups and individuals did not enjoy political power commensurate with their financial resources, they were by no means powerless. They manipulated the ruling party by financing various factions in their power struggle. For instance, even the fanatical Aurangzeb sought and received financial assistance from Ahmedabad bankers in his bid for power — Rs. 4,50,000, which was a lot of money those days.

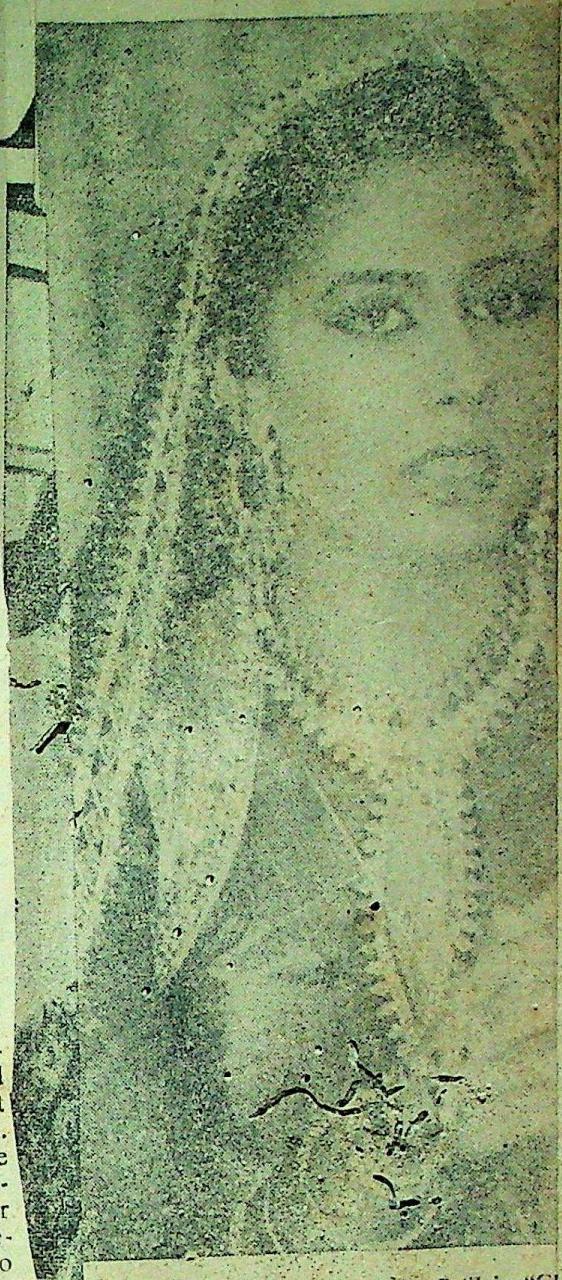
But whatever the reasons for Indian Muslims to succumb to the pull of the past, history has not waited, and will not wait, for them. It has moved on and it will move on at an even faster speed than ever before. For never before has the march of science and technology been so relentless and irresistible as today. Those who do not come to terms with these almost elemental forces, indeed master them, will be left out in the cold. There are those who, for instance, did not take to agriculture at the time of that great revolution thousands of years ago. After all, who are the tribals in our country today if not those who did not take to agriculture and, all that it implied in cultural and social terms. This is not to suggest that a similar fate awaits Indian Muslims or for that matter Muslims elsewhere. Reality has a way of compelling people to come to terms with it. But, as the saying goes, fate takes those who are going to go along and it drags those who are not so willing. Such attitudes do matter. To live in the past is to carry an enormous load which must hamper one's march into the future.

It has been fashionable in this century to counter this argument with the talk of roots and identity. Of course, every society must have its roots which cannot be located in the past. However, every society and in fact every individual must have an identity which too depends on the memory of the past. But these identities are different from the foliage. A living tree must renew its foliage every year. Similarly, a sense of identity is different from an obsession with the past. A human being must go through unless he is prepared to forget a lot. In fact, it is not a process. It is an automatic one as we all know from our own individual experience. We also know from recent history that mostly societies on the defensive invoke the concept of identity, the self-confident ones just go ahead. In 1971, he opened a campaign against what he called "rootless cosmopolitanism" when he wanted to insulate the Soviet Union from contact with the dynamic West and liquidate the better educated people in the country. Ayatollah Khomeini has been using the "Great Satan" in a similar bid to insulate Iran from the winds of change that are sweeping the world. These winds without doubt originate in the western world. But that is because the West is still the biggest powerhouse of ideas, values and techniques. It leads in the exploration of not only outer universe but also the inner universe of man and, indeed, of animals and plants. We can dismiss it only at our peril.

For the first time in deserted palaces in the memory of the wise and warm at the saints. For example, a neat contrast, quered here, this level Islam in India is serene, untroubled and secure. But Muslim

pervasive link of urine through the changing times, the contemporary demotic reality swamping the imperial settings. This is illustrated nowhere better than at the entrance to the Red Fort.

Press News



STAR-SPANGLED: Smita Patil in "G"

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Unlike Raphael who lived lavishly and Leonardo who had refined taste in music, clothes and houses and who kept servants and pupils, Michelangelo preferred to live in dingy dwellings.

by Jayshree Sengupta

HOW did the three great contemporaries, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael get along with each other? Their talents were much varied and Leonardo was not only an artist but a botanist, military engineer, interested in aerodynamics, architecture, sculpture and anatomy (he almost discovered the circulatory system). A more versatile genius is yet to be.

Michael successfully with the Indian elite in Delhi (generally identified as belonging to the Congress Party),

Taj Mahal, Matva Heritage and IKS-MoE Digitization Project. In a story he back of the scenes in a silence and 10' rehearsal, it's created so much tension that after the first take he'll get lots of claps for the "fantastic shot." I must try that out sometime. For kicks. To create an aura around yourself is important, I guess. I can't do that. The consolation is that I'm rated as one of the better, serious actresses. So I'm not expected to "giggle giggle" on the sets though I do miss the camaraderie of the smaller units.

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In any case, there aren't many women-oriented films around. The few that are made are so unrealistic that they show the heroine as a Devi or "pativrata." No one has made a really meaningful film on the working woman yet. There are plenty of competent directors, only they don't want to take the risk of tackling a "bold," unsaleable subject.

Do they concede that the smaller cinema is making waves?

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Is she producing you mad", she acting in the Holi Paasi, that's all enough money to my own."

Come on, dear I'm not. The art if I took Rs. 5 years ago, they'd the same amount commercial film making we've been paying lakhs, let's stick no one understand everyone else I have cost of living. I eat my vegetables."

It's late even plants in her bat to sleep. Elated to contact this time, a cocktail hosted journalists.

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You haven't talked of "Shakti" path."

Look, it's a straight action film being directed by Ravi Naigaich. I shoot guns, throw knives and ride horses like fearless Nadia. I'd love to do such a role 50 times.

And how would you feel if the result was crude after completion?

I'd be upset, depressed, I wouldn't forgive myself. I can't throw tantrums, put on la-di-dah airs or demand to know what's going on behind the camera. I may just be dancing but they could be zooming in on my back-side. What's to be done?

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In India

—As a Pakistani sees it

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In his last book, *Believers*, V. S. Naipaul saw rage, hate and anger in Muslim society, in Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. Perhaps if he visited the shrines of Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti — Gharib Nawaz, blesser of the poor — at Ajmer or Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi he would have confronted calm and peace and, above all, love. The Sufi saints practised the motto "sulh-i-kul", peace with all.

Ajmer, in the heart of Rajputana, land of drought, famine and proud people, lives in communal harmony. The continuity of the history of India for the last 800 years, when Gharib Nawaz arrived, is reflected here. Gifts by emperors and queens are on display and anecdotes about them abound. One of the early Muslim conquerors, Ghori, after defeating Prithvi Raj, in 1192 in one of the most decisive battles of north India, visited Ajmer to pay homage to the saint. Akbar donates a cauldron to cook 120 maunds of rice for 5000 people. His son Jahangir gave one which cooks for exactly half the number. Both are in use (on the right and left sides respectively, as you enter). Jahangir's son, Shah Jehan, constructed a mosque and so did his son Aurangzeb. Right up to this year, when the President of Bangladesh and the family of the President of Pakistan visited the shrine, the homage paid by the rich and powerful is recorded. Generation after generation of poor and rich have visited Ajmer.

Today the majority of the devotees at the Ajmer shrine are Hindus (I was told by the Syeds who tend the shrine, some 3000-4000 of the 4000-5000 who come daily). Hindu qawals — singers like Shankar Shambhu move congregations to tears. I heard miraculous stories of Gharib Nawaz's power from Muslims and Hindus of various social backgrounds. A senior Hindu civil servant recounted, fighting back tears, a personal miracle at Ajmer after failing to evoke a response from shrines elsewhere in India. There is an air of wonder and make-believe in Ajmer.

Some of the miracles are self-induced by the devotees. My companion — a gentle, devout Muslim — recollected a memory from his previous trip as a child to Ajmer with his father. A man had climbed atop a tree in the courtyard and was crying loudly. He demanded from Gharib Nawaz Rs. 5000 (a great deal of money in the 1940s). From the crowd stepped a Hindu Raja, requested the man to climb down and paid him the sum on the spot. The miracle remained fresh in my friend's mind after forty years. Here Islam has conquered hearts through love. At this level Islam in India is serene, untroubled and secure. But Muslims elsewhere presented a threat

The bright ten-year-old boy asked if I could do him a favour. My Pakistani mind wondered whether he wanted a visa to Pakistan or nationality? No. He simply wanted a set of photographs of Imran Khan, the Pakistani cricket captain. Did he wish to leave Jaipur? "No, sahib", he confidently replied, "I am going to set up my own business here. This is my home and I know three languages and know I can do well".

The middle class — lawyers, doctors, civil servants, defence personnel migrated en bloc to Pakistan. A dynamic middle class at its best has historically provided leaders, ideas, continuity, stability and strength to the community (all the three leaders named above were from this class). The migration of the middle class devastated the social structure of Indian Muslims and was largely responsible for their acephalous condition. For those who stayed, added to the joy for those going to a better life in Pakistan there was also a feeling of betrayal. The third category, the general poor — scattered in urban slums and village India — were the peasants, artisans and domestic servants. These remained behind in India and continued life as before as best they could. They, more than the other strata, continued to dress and live as before. In spite of pressures they clung to their traditional dress and language; in some places becoming easy fodder for communal riots. Their black velvet Rampuri caps, kurta-pyjama and the burqa, the shuttlecock veil that the better off with social aspirations wear — caricatured in films — still identify them easily. The burqa, in particular, infuriates the Indian intellectual who, upon seeing it is moved to comment: "Sister! you are the symbol of your community in India" (Nirad Chaudhuri — *The Continent of Circumstances*).

Devoid of the crucial middle class, the Muslim whole became fragmented and vulnerable. They were in danger of becoming invisible. However, there were many who stayed back and many who survived successfully. But there was a religio-cultural price of a sort to pay. Their very names changed: Yusuf Khan became Dilip Kumar, India's greatest matinee idol; Madhubala and Johnny Walker, a top actress and comedian, assumed non-Muslim names (this point can be overdrawn: Suraiya and Waheeda Rehman did not change their names). Many women paint a small circle in the centre of the forehead — the bindi — in the manner of Hindu women (to many Muslims in South Asia the bindi, like the sari, is seen not as a typical South Asian way of adornment but a Hindu one.) But superficial changes do not remove boundaries between different groups. More important are those who have merged through ideas and values. Those Muslims who held high office, such as the presidency of India, merged more successfully with the Indian elite in Delhi (generally identified as belonging to the Congress Party

with Muslims going back to the Crusades. Religious antipathy provides a base for cultural and social prejudices (see Said's powerful *orientalism*, Routledge, 1976). For the Indian, bombarded by the mass media, the image of a "revivalist" Muslim approximates to a caricature: he appears hysterical with religious fanaticism, sword in one hand and the Holy Quran in the other. For the Hindu this image evokes deep atavistic memories. His distrust of Islamic revivalism is thus doubly reinforced.

But what, in effect, does this revivalism mean for India? Some madrassahs, traditional Muslim schools, revitalised and an extra emphasis on teaching of the Holy Quran which instils feelings of community and confidence. To teach Muslim to be better human beings, cannot be in conflict with the philosophy of the majority community or the modern state.

Neither is the Imam of the Jama Masjid in Delhi an Imam Khomeini nor the Indian Muslims like the Afghan Mujahidin; the problems and people are different. The Imam in Delhi is a gentle and subdued figure. He does not want revolution; he desires tranquillity. He does not want to change the world; he wishes to preserve his way of life. He symbolises the Indian Muslim.

Indeed, the revivalism poses serious intellectual problems for Muslim theoreticians with Marxist leanings. Professor Irfan Habib, the outstanding Indian Marxist historian and beleaguered Muslim student at his own University, Aligarh, is one such example. Life for him at Aligarh is not relieved of his professional brilliance. His new book *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford University Press, has already sold out. This group self-consciously distances itself from any overt hint of communal sympathy. Aligarh, as a symbol of Muslim academic excellence, is thus torn between two opposed philosophies which spill into violent student politics (as in 1981 when students died in clashes).

The Indian secular intelligentsia — concerned with creating and maintaining the world's largest democracy, and threatened by a collapsing political order and economic situation — are quickly alarmed at signs of religious revivalism whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. Communism to them is at the opposite end of their political spectrum and from their intellectual position. Among Muslims and be-

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In India —As a Pakistani sees it

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But what, in effect, does this revivalism mean for India? Some madrassas, traditional Muslim schools, revitalised and an extra emphasis on teaching of the Holy Quran which evokes feelings of community and confidence. To teach Muslims to be better human beings cannot be in conflict with the philosophy of the majority community or the modern state.

Neither is the Imam of the Jama Masjid in Delhi an Imam Khomeini nor the Indian Muslims like the Afghan Mujahidin; the problems and people are different. The Imam in Delhi is a gentle and subdued figure. He does not want revolution; he desires tranquillity. He does not want to change the world; he wishes to preserve his way of life. He symbolises the Indian Muslim.

Indeed, the revivalism poses serious intellectual problems for Muslim theoreticians with Marxist leanings. Professor Irfan Habib, the outstanding Indian Marxist historian and beleaguered Muslim student at his own University, Aligarh, is one such example. Life for him at Aligarh is not relieved of his professional brilliance (his new book *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford University Press, has already sold out). This group self-consciously distances itself from any overt hint of communal sympathy. Aligarh, as a symbol of Muslim academic excellence, is thus torn between two opposed philosophies which spill into violent student politics (as in 1981 when students died in clashes).

The Indian secular intelligentsia — concerned with creating and maintaining the world's largest democracy, and threatened by a collapsing political order and economic situation — are quickly alarmed at signs of religious revivalism whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. Communism to them is at the opposite end of their political spectrum and from their intellectual position. Among Muslims and be-

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newly appointed President announced the forthcoming constitution. The Congress would itself bound by any terms, even though it agreed to take assembly only if all bound by agreements entered with the Cabinet. Nehru's statement reflected by Azad as unfortunate events in the course of his

and the League at the British and were slipping back of that they could of the future to the concessions therefore League "perfect action". Both and the Congress, you help had held a meeting, I have English customs of with a

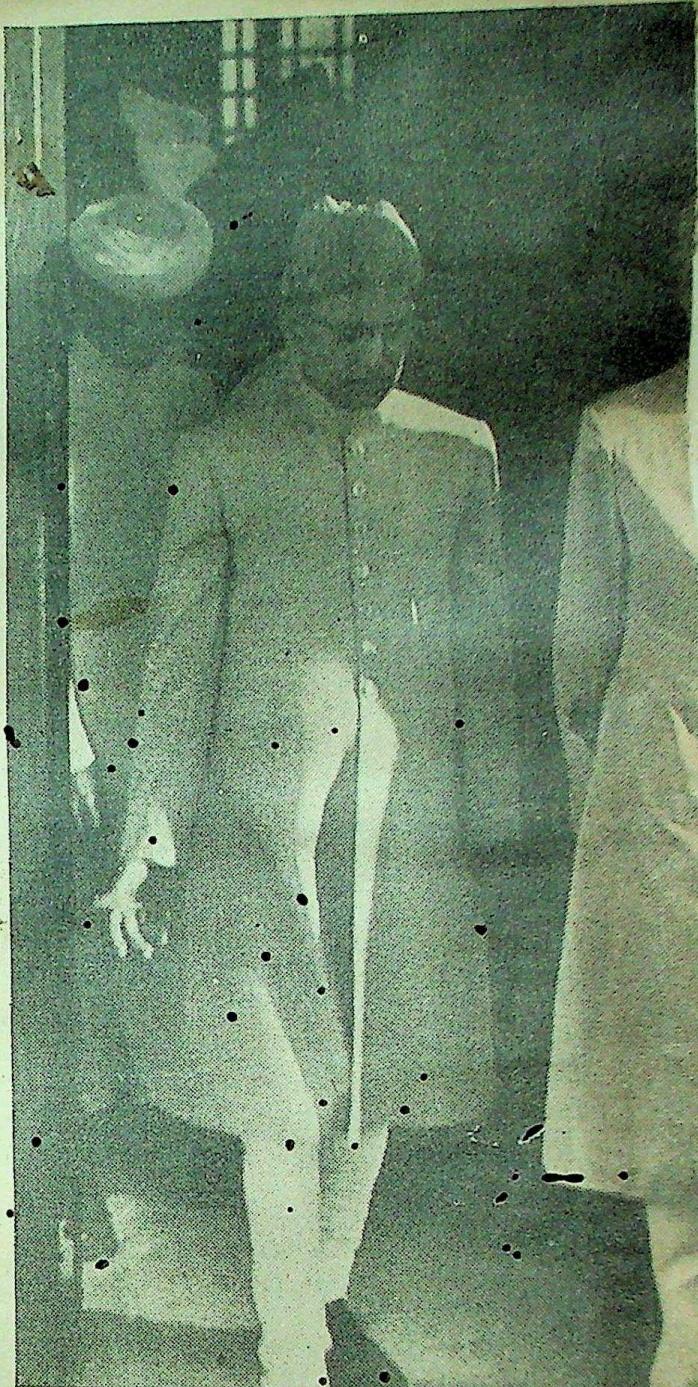
an effort to secure a Hindu raj, could have doubted that to make the League's direct action day a public holiday in Bengal was to invite trouble — an opportunity for Muslims to show that they were not to be trifled with. But Suhrawardy and his League colleagues cannot have begun to guess how much trouble their decision would release. There started in Calcutta that day an uncontrollable mass slaughter that spread across most of northern India and lasted for the next 16 months.

Arson Unleashed

It began with the Calcutta killings, three days of murder, unleashed by a Muslim initiative but soon overwhelmed by massive retaliatory Hindu onslaughts reinforced by a cavalry of local Sikh taxi and lorry drivers. When it was over, corpses were strewn about the streets, putrefying in the damp heat of the monsoon. Informed estimates of the number killed range between 4-5,000. Many more were wounded and more still were made homeless by mobs setting fire to their dwellings. When the army were brought in and, after three days, stopped the looting and murder, corpses were piled high on waste plots. A week later the stink of putrefaction still permeated the city, from bodies shoved down drains or ignored in burnt-out houses.

Wavell visited Calcutta and grasped its warning: unless a Congress-League settlement was reached quickly, the killings were likely to spread. He tried to persuade the Congress leaders to take part in a coalition government with the League, as proposed by the Cabinet mission, but Gandhi and Nehru disliked what they considered his "minatory" approach, and he was ordered from London not to risk a breach with the Congress. So, instead of a Congress-League coalition, Wavell was stuck with Nehru presiding over the first all-India government led by an Indian but with no League members.

The interim government and the constituent assembly both faced the prospect of being dominated by Congress and boycotted by the Muslim League. It was an ugly time. The flame lit by the Calcutta riots spread. Muslims at Noakhali and Tipperah in East Bengal murdered Hindus and burned their shops and houses. Fleeing Hindus arrived in Bihar, where their descriptions of the horrors they and their co-religionists had suffered



DIFFERENT TACTICS: It was not the British but Jinnah who in —a deliberate provocation of violence

to act impartially. When the violence was in scattered villages, as at Noakhali and in Bihar, the army was less effective: there were not enough soldiers to protect minority-dwellers in all the endangered villages.

Lord Wavell responded to the spread of violence with a withdrawal plan which he sent to London; if things got worse and the British could not govern, they should simply go, first turning over the southern provinces, where the Muslims were few and violence had not erupted, to their provincial governments, then evacuating the British women and children and concentrating the army in the troubled northern provinces before a final departure. To Attlee the plan smelt of scuttle, a military withdrawal without finding a political solution; instead, it pleased him, "My very great American woman," says one elderly Indian follower, "told me that we must not let the

of Burma has been told often, but the supreme commander was particularly responsible for the political decisions. In a difficult campaign, and knowing nothing of the plan to drop atom bombs on Japan, he needed Burmese allies and decided that the most effective Burmese leader was Aung San, formerly head of an anti-British revolutionary party and subsequently the ally of the Japanese when they conquered Burma.

By the latter stages of the war, Aung San had moved over to lead an anti-Japanese resistance movement and Mountbatten, needing his help, was prepared to give him in exchange political backing in his demand for immediate independence. The returned British Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, did not agree. He supported the Japanese. "I am sorry," he said, "but I must tell you that if you tell me that you will help me to get rid of the Japanese, I will tell you that you will help me to get rid of you."

s off a wave of violence



roduced a new form of persuasion

had been his own chief adviser on civilian affairs in Burma and who had recommended full military co-operation with Aung San.

Within An Hour . . .

Attlee summoned Rance to Downing Street, cross-examined him in his usual monosyllabic way, puffing at his pipe and, satisfied that Rance favoured prompt Burmese independence within the hour, appointed him governor. Britain's policy towards from trying to delay independence by keeping Aung San out of government to welcoming independence by bringing him in. Mountbatten was amazed by the speed of the decision.

Attlee found that Mountbatten's advice was sound. Burma quickly became "one country, one language, one people." The League of World Nations, which initially the ship which stuck in July 1947, was given a certain amount of time to leave the port of Rangoon.

power to other leaders of Aung San's party a few months later.)

Mountbatten's appointment as viceroy of India did not go altogether smoothly. As supreme commander he had been briefed by the two previous viceroys, Linlithgow and Wavell, and he knew something of their difficulties. Recognising the risk of failure, he laid down extraordinary conditions: first, he must consult his cousin the King (which Attlee had already done); second, in announcing his appointment, the government must also announce that British rule in India was to end by June 1948 — he would assume office only with the public promise that he was the last viceroy; third, he required a substantial say in drafting the statement announcing his appointment and defining his task; finally, he required to be allowed to complete the job without interference from the secretary of state for India or the Cabinet. Mountbatten was only 46. He had achieved spectacular seniority during the war. Now he was asking for more power than any modern British peacetime government had ever granted an individual.

Attlee had wanted Mountbatten as a new man to bring renewed energy to a basically unchanged policy. But Mountbatten, by his demand over timing, in effect changed the policy, although this was not generally realised at the time. By announcing a date by which they would go, come what may, the British government was effectively announcing something else: that if no agreement was reached between Congress and the League, the British would hand over to the existing provincial governments. Jinnah, having lost the powerful role in a united India that the Cabinet mission had almost secured for him, was likely to have to accept those provinces that opted to join Pakistan. Mountbatten's purpose in asking for a definite, final date had been to concentrate the minds of the Indians and make them get on with it. The granting of his request made the creation of Pakistan inevitable if the negotiations broke down.

No Accord

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947. By then an interim government of sorts was functioning: Wavell was trying to get Congress and League to work together as colleagues; the Congress members were trying to dominate and the League members were using office mainly to show how much trouble they could cause. Of the three, the League were the most successful. Their principal representative in the government, Liaquat Ali Khan, was finance minister, and was doing all he could to damage Congress's ministers and business leaders. Azad later wrote: "Whatever proposal (Patel, the home minister) was either rejected or modified beyond recognition by Liaquat Ali.... internal dissensions broke out within the government and went on increasing." An ICS man, K. B. Lall, later re-

League must be ejected. In effect he had decided to support the creation of Pakistan. But it was to be a minimal Pakistan. The Congress Working Committee resolved early in March 1947, just before Mountbatten's arrival, that both the Punjab and Bengal must be partitioned. That way the warring Muslims would be removed from the Indian union but they would not take too much of India with them. "When you get gangrene in your leg," Morarji Desai, a Gandhian Congressman in the 1940s and Prime Minister of India in the 1970s, explained, "you have to cut it off. If you allow it to remain the whole body gives in."

A Date Was Set

But Mountbatten's instructions did not go this far. Attlee and his colleagues in London were still committed to the Cabinet mission plan for a constituent assembly that would create a unitary government acceptable to all Indian parties, and Mountbatten was instructed to pursue this objective to the utmost of his power. Only if by October 1947 he found it to be impossible was he to consider alternatives. He thus arrived to find his instruction overtaken. The Cabinet still required him to spend seven months fighting for a unitary state when the Congress, supposedly a prime beneficiary of this policy, had given up the struggle.

Mountbatten introduced a new procedure. He decided to resolve the Indian problem by establishing relationships of understanding and trust with the five key Indian leaders, Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Liaquat and Patel. He began with grand entertainments. More Indians were invited to Viceroy's House than ever before. Mountbatten put his all into making them feel welcome. He was a sparkling socialiser and this part of his task came easily to him. He put on his uniforms and all his medals and quickly won personal credit not only with the princes, who had been accustomed to come to the viceroy's palace, but with political, social, administrative and industrial leaders. Many years later Countess Mountbatten's lady-in-waiting, Jaya Thadani, remembered this last viceroyalty:

Everything moved so well because they themselves were both very proficient. He had the German quality of extreme discipline and everything had to be perfect. It was a social household. There were dinner parties and drinks parties. Everybody in that house knew that it was the end of an era, that when Mountbatten left there was going to be prohibition. So everybody was determined to drink the viceroy's cellar clear. That didn't make morning, except that Lord Louis, as we called him, and Lady Louis always were clear-headed and knew exactly what they were going to do with the rest of the day. We would follow rather bleary-eyed and often muddled along as best we could.

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WITNESSING THE MUTINY

The Sound of Fury: an Account of the Indian Mutiny. By Richard Collier. (Collins.)
In this disastrous cén-
tre which has so brutally
refuted the Victorian
dream of an unfolding civilisa-
tion ripening from precedent to
precedent, we are still appalled
by the horrors of the Indian
Mutiny.

Winston Churchill once wrote
that in spite of their crimes the
figures of Danton, Robespierre
and Marat still gleamed luridly
across the years, and although
the great actors of the Mutiny
do not stand out with equal
clarity, the place-names can
never be forgotten—Meerut,
Cawnpore, Lucknow, Delhi: the
very sound of them still falls
upon the ear like the knell of
doom.

It is a pity that Richard Collier
has prefaced a brilliant and sus-
tained piece of descriptive writing
by an explanation so slight and so
biased of the causes of the Indian
Mutiny. He has taken the course,
now popular in the abject English
masochism about their past
achievements, of attributing the
whole disaster to the rapacity and
incompetence of the East India
Company.

Went as Suplicants

When studying the vast mosaic of India there is no place for such snap decisions or facile judgments. The English had first gone to India as suplicants of the Moghul Empire, but in the end they had been faced by what Macaulay in one of his more accurate generalisations called "the stupendous process of the reconstruction of a decomposed society."

Still, Dalhousie's policy of annexing any State left without a direct male heir when the ruler died left many angry and disappointed aspirants. The annexation of Oudh, in particular, the great Muslim State in the north, one of the Company's most loyal allies, although justified, and indeed inevitable, might almost have been calculated to stimulate

Brahmans were also beginning to suspect a threat to the supremacy of their system in the advance of science and the approach of an age of reason. "In part at least," as one author expressed it, "the Mutiny was the reaction of obscurantists against social change."

Officers Aloof

An equally powerful cause of discontent was the growing aloofness of regimental officers from their men. The days when an officer lived in constant and intimate contact with his men, and was regarded almost as a father, were ending.

Englishwomen coming out in the cold weather had become a distracting influence, and the sepoys themselves were secretly nourishing grievances which were soon to bring their indignation to the boil. In 1856, the year before the Mutiny, they had been made to swear an oath on enlistment that they would serve abroad, although

to cross the sea was pollution to an orthodox Hindu.

They had further grievances after the annexation of Oudh that their standing in the villages had been greatly decreased when the rule of the Company had been substituted for that of the King. Rumours had been passing among them that the Army was to be disbanded, and that the Governor-General, Canning, intended to convert the sepoys to Christianity by force. Even if the fatal bungling of the greased cartridges had never occurred, the Mutiny would surely have come about in some other way.

Mr. Collier's description of the disaster in different parts of India is masterly. He tells us that his

THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD

object was not to write a definitive history, but "to present an evocative portrait of the time through the eyes of a handful of people . . . how it felt, how it sounded and how it smelt."

He has an eye for macabre detail:

"Among the slain was Mrs. Sophia Christian, beheaded as she wept over her fallen husband. All who had known tall, graceful Mrs. Christian felt a thrill of horror, recalling her vivid performance in the Christmas pantomime of 'Blue Beard.' 'And will you really cut off my head?' she had pleaded."

Delhi and Lucknow

Mr. Collier has clearly visited all the places he describes, and has wonderfully recaptured the atmosphere of a bygone India. Each episode is a tour de force in itself: the butchery at Meerut; the siege of Delhi when the English troops sweltered in their cantonments on the great spine of the Ridge, and the pathetic figure of the last puppet Emperor was derided in his own Red Fort by the mutineers he was sheltering; the drawn-out siege of Lucknow seen from both within and outside the beleaguered walls; the horrors of Cawnpore.

There is a memorable picture of Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, and the leaders of the avenging armies are vividly portrayed: Hayeck fighting his way too late to Cawnpore; Nicholson dying in the assault on Delhi; Outram, and Colin Campbell, who commanded the fearsome onslaught of the 93rd Highlanders on the Sikanderbagh at Lucknow. I have seldom felt the atmosphere of battle to be more realistically and more horribly conveyed, and with it the author's

sense of place and landscape, of sound and smell, of trees and flowers, and the stifling heat of India.

The most appalling aspect of the Indian Mutiny was the ferocity with which it was conducted on both sides. To the English the shock was rendered more ghastly by the fact that they had always regarded the sepoy as a friend. They were bewildered as well as enraged by their sudden treacheries and hideous atrocities. And their terror was increased when they realised how naked and exposed they were, once the native army had turned against them.

Of the 300,000 of the Company's armies less than 50,000 were English troops, and in a district of more than a million Indians there might be but one English magistrate. The barbarities inflicted on their women produced a corresponding savagery in the English. The Victorians created for themselves an ideal conception of womanhood as something delicate and vulnerable that must be shielded from the grosser aspects of life.

Women's Bravery

Few Englishwomen had the slightest conception of what it meant to be at the mercy of a victorious enemy, mad with hate and fear, and one of the most wonderful things in the whole Mutiny is the gallant manner in which they met its horrors. But when men heard that a pregnant woman had been ripped open at Meerut in hideous travesty of a caesarean operation, and that children had been hacked to pieces, they were filled with a terrible rage of which they had not thought themselves capable.

Was even Gen. Neill, called "Butcher" by his troops, to be blamed for his actions after he had gazed down upon the dreadful detritus of 120 dead Englishwomen in the well at Cawnpore and seen the room where they had been massacred, two inches deep in congealed blood, and what was left in it: a row of children's shoes, toys, a poster of the "Cawnpore Summer Race Meeting," a locket marked "Ned's hair with love," and, "as if a macabre property master had set this scene . . . a song 'non giovar il Sospira' (it helps not to sigh)."

We are driven once again to the trite and melancholy conclusion that violence merely begets violence, and leave this vivid book with the reflection that it is strange that the upheaval which seemed to contemporaries in India like the end of the world proved in the event to be only an interruption.



Whistler's "Battersea Reach," painted about 1853.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ATTITUDES TO 1857

"Clemency" Canning. By Michael MacLagan. (Macmillan, 45s.)

THERE seems, from a sympathetic study of Charles John, 1st Earl Canning, no particular reason other than and political patronage why he should have become Governor-General and Viceroy of India from 1856 to 1862. Third son of a Prime Minister, his political career in England had taken him no higher than Postmaster-General; even Queen Victoria was surprised when he was nominated for this lucrative and immensely responsible post, as she had frequently discussed the appointment and his name had not even been mentioned. In the event, the Directors of the East India Company had chosen better probably than they knew. Even in 1856, they could not foresee the tempestuous events only a year ahead; events which were to change the whole pattern of India's history.

Canning, with no particular experience as an administrator, found himself as the head of a great country where mutiny, rebellion and massacres threatened to bring British rule to a sudden close. Calcutta Europeans called shrilly for revenge and drastic retaliation; reprisals were already ruthless and widespread. Canning proclaimed "I will not govern in anger" and did his best to stem the bloody tide. For this and other acts he was sneeringly called "Clemency" Canning by the white residents of Calcutta who, frequently in a state of panic but almost never in danger, exercised their emotions in calumny against the Governor-General; today that sneer has become a title of honour, a tribute to a man who, by the standards of his time, stood for enlightenment and humanity.

Among those who admired and supported Canning's general policy of tempering justice with mercy and his endeavours to call a halt to indiscriminate revenge, however, there were many who criticized his famous Oudh Proclamation. Mr MacLagan deals with this subject at length. He may not convince everyone by his defence of his kinsman (he is a great-great-nephew of Canning) but he produces valuable material for study from hitherto unpublished private writings of Canning himself. His steps to induce the Taluqdars of Oudh to abandon direct resistance and indirect support of the mutineers by declaring the confiscation of all but six named properties were opposed by men on the spot of great experience; they aroused sharp criticism in London, and at this distance of time are still clearly open to many objections. Nevertheless Canning saw what he did as part of a consistent policy of being "merciful without weakness and indulgent without compromise of the dignity of the Government". It is fair to judge it in that light and to consider it in the context of the six years of his administration, and particularly in the steps he initiated to heal post-Mutiny wounds.

Canning died, from an amoebic liver, soon after he returned to England; his wife, the beautiful and lively Charlotte, had died just before they were lasers.

due to depart from Calcutta, leaving him distraught and desolate; she was buried at Barrackpore where her grave still stands. So two of the leading figures in the great drama that swept India did not long survive the final curtain of the first act. For Canning it was perhaps as well; he was wrecked in health and he would have had to watch subsequent Viceroys dig up and destroy much of the valuable seed he had sown.

Mr MacLagan, an Oxford don, has had special access to the Canning papers and carried out research in the National Archives in Delhi, in Calcutta and in the India Office Library in London. The book, he says, has been a long time in writing. There is internal evidence of this but the delays were worth while, for they permitted Mr MacLagan to visit India with obvious gain both to his writing and feeling. Nobody interested in the period of history covered by the Mutiny should miss this presentation of Canning's case.

LEARNED CLARKE

Profiles of the Future. By Arthur C. Clarke. (Gollancz, 21s.)

If Mr Clarke had not got the Kalinga Award already, he would have got it for his "Profiles". He first writes of the hazards of prophecy, gives instances of men who made fools of themselves by predicting things, and then proceeds to make not a few prophecies of his own. Mr Clarke has been right before.

The best chapters by far are on transport and communications. His main thesis is on the limits of the possible; but things he considers perfectly possible, in the not too distant future, are breathtaking enough. Having already thought of Telstar—building one is more difficult, Mr Clarke concedes—he thinks the Hovercraft has great possibilities; motor cars he dismisses as primitive and pre-scientific. How fast shall we travel? Man, he says, will be content with nothing short of the ultimate 670,615,000 mph. Shall we visit other planets? Why not? It is not, however, true that all space will some day be conquered; that's impossible. In communications, there will be fantastic things, perhaps there will be 20-digit telephone numbers to dial.

At the end of the book there is a chart of the future. If science progresses no faster than in the last 150 years, Mr Clarke thinks, in 1980 there will be planetary landings, in 2000 colonization of planets, in 2020 robots, in 2030 contact with extra-terrestrials, in 2070 climate control, in 2080 machine intelligence exceeds man's; and in 2090 we are promised World Brain and Immortality. Wonderful prospects—or, are they? But Mr Clarke writes exceedingly well, handles scientific facts and figures with the easy skill of a magician keeping balls in the air and has a fine sense of humour. One wishes he had explained a little more lucidly what Cetacean languages and Cyborgs might be. If not, more elementarily, masers and

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The Spirit Of 1857

The 1857 revolt was in a significant sense a peasant revolt.

by Govind Talwalkar

PROF. Eric Stokes who died in 1981 was one of the foremost British historians of India. His book *The English Utilitarians and India* is much acclaimed. Peasants under the Raj was his special subject and the present volume, *The Peasant Armed*, is, in fact, a precursor to another book on the 1857 revolt which was under preparation at the time of his death. He had made extensive notes. However, Prof. C. A. Bayly has put this material together in book form. This may not be a complete book but it brings out clearly the civilian aspect of the great revolt.

The revolt of 1857 has been the subject of controversy all these years and innumerable books have been written on the subject. The British official view was that it was a mutiny by the Indian section of the Bengal Army and the subsequent breakdown of law and order was a by-product.

But even in July 1857 Disraeli had asked in the House of Commons whether the British were not facing national revolt. The vociferous mercantile community in Calcutta was critical of Canning, the governor-general, for not recognising the fact that they

had a formidable civil rebellion to deal with.

Colonel G. B. Malleson who completed J. W. Kaye's great *History of the Sepoy War* was of the opinion that, "at first a mere military mutiny it speedily changed its character and became a national insurrection." Kaye believed that British policy steadily alienated the aristocracy and the priesthood while failing to reconcile the peasant proprietors. These classes were represented in the army and naturally reflected the mood of anger and frustration. In this frame of mind the ordinary soldier defied the orders of the British officers.

While working on the 1857 revolt, Stokes delved deep into the history of the colonial empires and studied the settlement reports in India. He wanted to make his colleagues and readers aware of the complexities of social movements in an ancient agrarian society. Stokes maintained that the 1857 rebellion was not one movement, but a conglomeration of many. Its character which varied from district to district was determined by complex factors. Though the caste factor was decisive in some respects the author has also shown that people of the same caste did not always react in the same way.

That the revolt was military

as well as civil has been well substantiated by Stokes. He points out that if there had been guerrilla armies or organised flank attacks the movement of British troops would have been different if not entirely impossible.

The sepoys were no cowards. Griffith asserts that, "it speaks well for the powers of the mutineers and proves that we had no contemptible foe to deal with... nothing could exceed their persistent courage in fighting almost every day."

But courage alone could not ensure victory. Any objective student of history would agree with Stokes when he says that the British gained a victory by default. The rebels declined to wage a battle to the death out of which they might still have snatched a desperate triumph." Another factor in favour of the British was that they were the only power which had almost an all-India character with a good organising capacity.

However, the most decisive factor which weighed in favour of the British was their cavalry and artillery. The rebels did not launch a well-planned attack. They concentrated on Delhi and when they could not capture it they felt demoralised. If they had had a unified command and strategy they could have harassed

The Peasant Armed: The Indian Rebellion Of 1857:
By Eric Stokes : Edited By A. C. Bayly (Clarendon Press, Oxford; Rs. 150, 1986)



colonial power.

Stokes concludes that the more secure landlords and tenants who had prospered through access to the markets of the small towns remained quiet even when the British military presence was withdrawn.

Stokes maintains that the 1857 revolt was in a significant sense a peasant revolt but he does not accept the fact that those who revolted were only the down-trodden.

The rebellion was a brief marvel. It was without an issue, devoid of a mastermind and lacked in superior weapons and organising capacity. But in that brief period British power was on the point of collapse and it won merely by default.

Lost in America

Unlike other Yiddish writers of the time, Singer refused to make a clean break with his past. "I belonged neither to my own people nor to any other peoples." Out of such disorientation is the purest form of literature born.

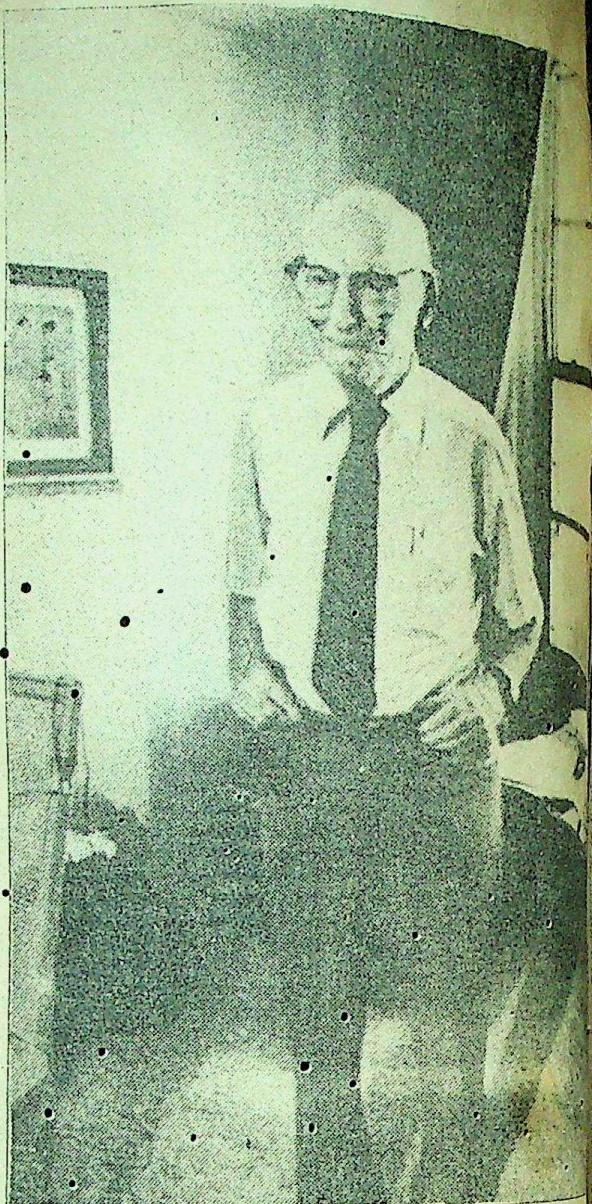
by Subhash K. Jha

A STRONG sense of tradition and heritage, of the author's Jewishness, pervades this evocative account of Isaac Singer's early years. The memoir traces his childhood and adolescence in the small Polish town, Bilgoroi, his youth in Warsaw and concludes with the vividly etched memory of the author's migration to America. Singer himself describes the work as a "spiritual biography, fiction set against a background of truth". But it is much more: the memoir leaves the reader with a lingering sense of satisfaction, an overwhelming feeling of well-being in spite of the tone of despair and doom.

The first chapters describe the early years against the backdrop of World War I. Questions of life, existence and creation haunted Singer with a nagging intensity that hurled across the corridors of his being. Where lay "the truth"? In the holy scriptures or science? Or does one seek one's own truth? Singer's elder brother — a gifted writer in his own right — disbelieved the theory of divine creation; for Singer, the metaphysical dilemma could not be resolved so easily. As he groped in the dark for faith and conviction, writing provided a release of sorts from this existential crisis. Though here too, confusion reigned supreme.

Unlike the other Yiddish writers of the time, Singer refused to make a "clean" break with his past; his early efforts evoked "memories and emotions that the wordly reader sought to forget... I belonged neither to my own people nor to any other peoples". Out of such disorientation is born the purest form of literature: Conrad, Mann and Naipaul are all products of this cultural dichotomy. While the other Yiddish writers were engrossed in political writings, Singer "waged a private war against the Almighty". Spinoza, Freud, Jung, Adler, Kant, Tolstoy and Mann failed to provide spiritual solace; Singer had to search for his own religion.

The author was deeply disturbed by the lack of success in his writing, and with the brunt of ridicule he became with his deep interest in the occult and philosophy. Yet, he remained rigidly evolved to keep his efforts free from the sentimentality, primitiveness and pettiness that was prevalent in Yiddish literature in which "almost everything was for-



AN EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA: Isaac Bashevis Singer

Love And Exile : By Isaac Bashevis Singer
£ 4.95

"bidden". Singer realised the importance of sexual freedom in literature early in his life: "To write about love and exclude sex was a useless labour." —

World War I disturbed Singer deeply — "How could I write about love while millions of innocent creatures writhed in the clutches of slaughterers..." Like many creative persons, Singer sought spiritual solace through sensual satisfaction. His relationships with women were mercurial and temporal, tinged with a touch of summer madness. The first of these endless encounters took place immediately after Singer moved from his hometown to Warsaw. The passionate Gina initiated Singer into the world of fiery emotion (the earlier encounters were "always in a hurry and in an atmosphere of fear"). The sexual current that ran between the two is described as "throbbing with life, savage lust, a singing and lamenting madness" which aroused both desire and revulsion within the author. Such

amorous experiences formed Singer into a "nihilist" — "Women...ingly like me — just as deceitful, egotistical, for adventures". There's thing astoundingly absurd blown in Singer's mind about the opposite sex. The author was attractive to women, he confesses the stormy relationship had a dour and spirit. The author has the vibrant freshness of a summer morning. The passage gives Singer a Lawrentian twist to reaffirm this view. The author confesses that he liked the men who scolded, repented, pampered him. During his major fling, Singer found the value of suspense; that is, the essence of both life and literature. In my writing fashion, I often began where one began and ended."

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The Left And The Congress I - Can The Fence Be Mandated

The Left And The Congress I - Can The Fence Be Mended?

TODAY, buffeted on all sides by the Rajiv Gandhi government's appeal to the CPM and the CPI to support it against destabilisation. This call has not gone completely unheeded. Both parties of the mainstream left have come out publicly against any attempted "constitutional coup" by the President. They have also emphasised that there is indeed a serious danger of destabilisation by western imperialism (i.e. the U.S.) and its allies in the region (particularly Pakistan), though they have said that the present government has been partially responsible for bringing this crisis on its head.

But there is no indication either that both parties are willing now or will be willing in the not too distant future to join hands with the ruling Congress in a *de facto*, if not formal, alliance. This is what no doubt many on the right of the communist movement (e.g. Mohit Sen, Dange) and in the Congress are pressing for. But so far both the CPM and CPI have been careful to avoid even hinting that they might consider such an embrace. Thus at a recent meeting in Delhi organised by Mr Darbara Singh, at which a prominent spokesperson for this perspective, Mr P.N. Haksar was present, the CPM and CPI were conspicuous by their absence. In reality, there are tendencies and pressures pushing the CPM in particular, towards such an alliance. But there are also counter-tendencies and counterpressures. Both have to be taken into account in order to accurately chart not only the likely trajectory of the parliamentary left but also its current distance from the Congress.

Strategic Support

The CPI's situation is somewhat different from that of the more powerful and dominant CPM. If anything, the former is today more wary of the Congress and its attempted embrace. The emergency experience was in fact an historical watershed. Between 1964 (when the CPI-CPM split took place) and 1977, the CPI had consistently followed a policy of strategic support to the ruling Congress. Since the fall of emergency, shortly after which the CPI re-evaluated its own role in supporting Mrs Gandhi's Congress and emergency rule, a majority of the CPI (today led by Mr Rajeswar Rao) have been consistent in rejecting this once strongly held strategic perspective. It has, since 1977, been opposed to Congress "authoritarianism" and therefore committed to the forging of a "left and democratic" front despite Moscow's periodic pressure on it to restore the old alliance. This pressure may not have been sustained or very strong, but it has been there. This should be a salutary reminder that the CPI-CPSU relationship is not a simplistic or straightforward "big brother" relationship.

Furthermore, the CPI, unlike the CPM, is a party in decline. Its electoral base is broader but also thinner than that of the CPM. It has no regional bastion of power to build upon. Its party membership is steadily declining. It was 5,47,000 during the emergency years, it fell to 446,420 in 1983. Its trade union federation, AITUC, is a shadow of the force it once used to be. AITUC has (according to latest verified figures) 3,44,000 members which is about the same as CITU (3,31,000)

By ACHIN VANAIK

except that the latter is at least growing in West Bengal. Its relative position is also slipping, with INTUC having over 2.2 billion members, the BMS with over 1.2 million and the HMS with some 7,35,000 members. In short, the CPI is a party on the defensive looking to merge with the CPM to restore communist influence and fortunes.

This is sensible enough. But despite virtually complete programmatic agreement, the merger is unlikely to occur, essentially because two separate bureaucratic apparatuses cannot agree on how to share the spoils in a single united party bureaucracy. Unsurprisingly, enthusiasm for a merger of the CPI and CPM is much greater at the lower and middle cadre levels than at the top level of leadership. Given the imbalance in prestige and authority between the CPM and the CPI and the relatively greater seriousness with which the CPI treats the issue of merger, it is the CPM that will set the pace or make the running on the question of what relations the mainstream left should have with the ruling Congress.

What then about the CPM? What are its ambitions? Where does the Congress come into these plans, if it does? The first point to note is the systematic and continuing *social democratisation* of the CPM. Only its most devoted followers will believe that it is any longer seriously committed to an extra-parliamentary path to power. Ten years of unbroken rule in West Bengal (the longest such experience of provincial communist rule in the non-communist world) has also thoroughly bureaucratised its internal structures. Its basic strategy for growth is first to consolidate itself in its regional bastions, to secure the firmest possible foundation there and then to advance elsewhere to become more than just a regional party. This means it has to break through organisationally and electorally in the Hindi belt, something it has signally failed to do. Even today only some 25,000 of its cadres are in this belt while 70 per cent of its around 367,000 total members are from West Bengal and Kerala. In the former state, membership rose between 1978 from 43,300 to 136,980 and in Kerala, from 67,500 to 122,070 in the same period. As far as the Hindi belt goes, anti-Congressism has yielded no political or electoral dividends.

Electoral Dividends

There are three important structural barriers against a Communist-Congress alliance. First, there is the domestic economic policy of the Rajiv government which, after all qualifications are allowed for, is intended to strengthen capitalist growth. To be sure the CPM in West Bengal has now welcomed and promoted the very multinational investment which it roundly denounced in less "responsible" times when it was running for elections in 1977. But the CPM justifies this as the unavoidable management of capitalism on behalf of the oppressed classes until such time as it is able to come to power at the Centre and thereby initiate the true socialist transformation of India. This in its own eyes is a very different thing from the capitalist exploitation of India by the Congress on behalf of the bourgeoisie. So the CPM must remain implacably hostile to such economic policies. Is there a possi-

ble meeting ground between this "forced" management of regional capitalism by the CPM and the unabashed promotion of capitalism by the Congress at the Centre? There is and it is in the field of Centre-state relations, but more on that later.

The second main barrier to convergence is the electoral rivalry between mainstream communism and the Congress in the areas of communist strength i.e. Tripura, West Bengal and Kerala. This point is obvious enough and needs no elaboration. Thirdly, the Congress organisation, culture and ideology as it has evolved over the last fifteen years moves it even further away from the culture and practices of mainstream communism no matter how "embourgeoisified" this culture and these practices may have become. The CPI and CPM remain relatively disciplined cadre parties with a coherent ideology and a cadre and mass following loyalised around this ideology. The concept of "politics as business" has made fewer inroads here than into the other parties where it has indeed become the dominant political culture.

Basic Doctrine

But if all these are the counter tendencies preventing the left from drifting towards the Congress, these are, on balance, more than compensated for by the tendencies towards convergence. This is not to argue that there will be convergence. Indeed, it will require exceptional circumstances to create a Communist-Congress strategic alliance. But it does mean that over the last five years there has been a limited and partial shift by the left towards the Rajiv government. This overall shortening of distance between the left and Congress has been disguised by state level confrontations, mutual polemics, the accelerated economic liberalisation and perhaps, above all, the Centre-states conflict, with the latter pressing for ever greater autonomy. But on closer investigation the contention that the gap is smaller than it was is irrefutable.

Consider first the basic doctrine of the CPI and CPM with respect of the path to be followed regarding the Indian revolution. The struggle is against imperialism and capitalism. But both the CPI and CPM subscribe to a two-stage concept of how the revolution must be conducted. In the first stage where the goal is a "national democratic" or "peoples democratic" revolution i.e. capitalism is not yet overthrown, there is a distinct bias in favour of the anti-imperialist struggle, as the crucial one.

This "anti-imperialism" is seen as almost indistinguishable from the Kremlin's world view and its "revolutionary" foreign policy. In so far as "non-aligned" and Indo-Soviet friendship remain essential pillars of the Rajiv government's foreign policy then this policy receives faithful endorsement from the CPI and CPM. There is thus an inherent receptiveness on the part of the CPI/CPM to any halfway credible claim by the Centre that western imperialism, namely the USA, is seeking to "destabilise" the country and that these efforts need to be thwarted by uniting around the ruling Congress, which for all its capitalist faults pursues, on balance, a progressive, anti-imperialist policy.

(To Be Concluded)

II—The Left And The Congress

By ACHIN VANAIK

HERE has also been, in the case of the CPM, an important additional emphasis in strategic orientation which has not received the attention it has deserved. In recent times the CPM's strategic perspective for domestic alliance building has emphasised the construction of a "left and secular front" as well as that of constructing a "left and democratic front". This gives the CPM a certain flexibility. In assembly elections where Congress is the main opponent, the "left and democratic front" slogan remains indispensable. But the new terminology is nonetheless undeniably significant. The original slogan of a "left and democratic front" emerged as a perspective to topple and oppose the "authoritarian" rule and character of the Congress under Mrs Gandhi during after emergency. Even after her death and the emergence of her son as the new leader, the CPM could hardly repudiate in public its characterisation of the Congress as "authoritarian". To do so would leave it defenceless to the charge that it had been unMarxist and opportunist in defining the character of a party primarily or even solely in terms of the character of its leader. So there was no change in the characterisation of the Rajiv Congress, except that the CPM's references to the Congress Party's "authoritarianism" after Mrs Gandhi's death became increasingly infrequent to the point of vanishing.

Strategic Support

With the Punjab problem in particular and communalism in general, becoming more and more the central issue of domestic politics, the CPM has emphasised the building of a "left and secular front" in order to preserve the "unity and integrity" of the country. Potentially, at least this leaves the way open for a *de facto* alliance with the Congress if the threat to Indian "unity and integrity" becomes particularly acute. The Congress after all may have communal elements within its ranks, it may be guilty of occasional communal behaviour but both the CPI and CPM see it as fundamentally secular in the same way that the BJP is supposed to be fundamentally communal. Thus there is now a distinct and subtle shift in the pre-occupations of the CPM. Its central domestic task is to fight the communal danger and the external destabilisers and in doing so, even prevent the resurrection of an authoritarian order. This danger now comes from those elements inside or outside the Congress Party who are friends or puppets of the west. Gone is the earlier wholesale identification of the Congress with "authoritarianism."

Further more, on the national level, given the persisting failures and weaknesses of the attempts to unite the non-Congress opposition parties, the CPM might well become more inclined to bet on co-operation with rather than confrontation against the Congress as the better

way to extend communist influence and authority outside its regional bastions. The possibility of this coming about if the Centre were to make greater concessions and states, as a kind of quid pro quo, to communist support. That is to say they can enhance the powers of communist dominated governments in Kerala and West Bengal, particularly by, for example, giving its residual powers to state governments, more favourable of the latter, a cabinet of Mr Ashok Mitra when a West Bengal finance minister a step would greatly increase mainstream left's ability to frame its multi-class programme and thereby strengthen its much wider appeal and base. This is a "mobilising for everybody" approach and a far-cry indeed from any genuine politics of "class struggle" and mobilisation".

Utterly Dismal

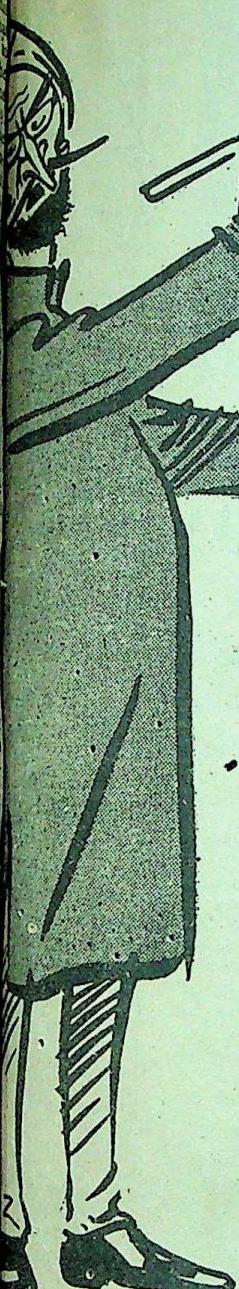
To sum up, the CPM and the CPI in its wake, have drifted towards Congress in the last five years. The Congress has not moved to the left in this period contrary to what the CPM might say about recent developments. At most it has remained stationary. More radically, it has shifted to the right. Thus the CPM/CPI's trajectory of movement has been clearly towards the right in keeping with a new social democratisation. However, definite and substantial remains between the two ends means that a left and Congress alliance is not on the immediate agenda. It would have to take national circumstances to move the CPI/CPM from its current vantage point where it has the benefit of remaining independent, having considerable room for manoeuvre and able to enjoy the benefits of being wooed by both the main party and most of the other opposition parties. What is crucial is that the circumstances become exceptional e.g. that the "unity and integrity" of the nation actually be in mortal danger, or that the CPI/CPM perceive it to be so.

However, the possibility of such a scenario emerging in the coming period cannot be dismissed entirely. It might come about as a consequence of the deepening of the corruption scandal represented by the Fairfax and/or submarine and/or Bofors affairs. It might emerge as a result of a decisive escalation of Indo-Pakistan tensions, or as a result of a decisive deterioration of the Punjab situation or as a combination of these pressures. As the crisis deepens, one has to take into account the fact that the US may well increase its pressure on the CPI/CPM to support the Congress. Prospects for the future emergence of a left and Congress alliance, therefore, are neither exceedingly bright nor utterly dismal.

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state unknown to them. However when an important constitutional issue arises the head of state is not confined to the interested advice of ministers, but may seek counsel from other sources.

The essential duty is one of co-operation with ministers so long as they remain in office. Why? Because ministers are the chosen representatives of the people and, so long as they remain such in thwarting them the President is opposing not the ministers as individuals but the public will, to which as constitutional head he is bound to give effect.

This principle has been incorporated in our Constitution by Articles 74 and 111 which in effect oblige the President to act according to ministerial advice and in the ultimate resort to grant assent to a bill presented to him. There are certain exceptions where the very nature of the situation may require the President to act on his own initiative. But that does not detract from the general rule.

What about the President's oath of office to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law...."? Can he not refuse to assent to a bill which appears to him plainly unconstitutional? The argument is attractive but has been rightly negatived by the Supreme Court in Shamsher Singh's case: "He defends the Constitution not by denying its spiritual essence or cabinet responsibility — indeed he subverts it that way — but by accepting as his constitutional function what his 'responsible' ministers have decided... if every functionary who takes the oath by the Constitution interprets according to his lights, this solemn document would be the source of chaos and confusion..."

Does that mean that the only course for the President is to sign or resign? That depends on the President's conscience. If presidential doubts persist and are also shared by responsible and independent circles in the country, the correct course for the government would be to make a reference to the Supreme Court and obtain its opinion under Article 143 of the Constitution.

What are the President's rights? They are comprehended in Bagehot's classic phrase "the right to be consulted, to warn and encourage". The corresponding obligation of the Prime Minister is to keep the President in touch with the important aspects of administration. This English parliamentary convention has been incorporated in Article 78 of our Constitution, which prescribes the duties of the Prime Minister in

these terms:

- a) To communicate to the President all decisions of the council of ministers relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union and proposals for legislation; b) to furnish such information relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union and proposals for legislation as the President may

It is not the constitutional function of the President to dismiss a government which enjoys the confidence of the House nor can he do so on the slippery ground that the government has ceased to represent the wishes of the electorate because in most cases the President would not be sufficiently equipped to arrive at such an assessment with any degree of certainty. Besides any error of judgment would be ruinous to himself and the presidency which would be regarded by the public as having become a football of contending political factions. The President also cannot dismiss a duly elected government on the ground of incapacity, unfitness or corruption for the simple reason that he has no such disciplinary jurisdiction.

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Let us clearly grasp the implications of this momentous decision. Under our constitutional scheme there would be two constitutional functionaries : - the President who is the formal or constitutional head of the state and the Prime Minister, who, as the head of the government is entrusted with the formulation and the successful implementation of its policies. The seat of ultimate responsibility is the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. There is located the real centre of power. The President is the symbol of the nation and has an important constitutional role to play but has no special responsibilities for the actual governance of the country. The founding fathers were clear that there could not be two parallel authorities exercising governmental powers.

Prime Minister are subject to certain norms of constitutional behaviour and discipline. They both have mutual rights and obligations. What are they?

THE President's obligations flow from the principle of responsible government whose essential basis, as Keith explains, is that actions of the king, are performed on the advice of his ministers who are responsible to the people and who may lose their office if they fail to win public approval for the royal acts. From this it follows that the constitutional head owes to his ministers, whose responsibility serves as the shield between him and the people, certain duties. They are: he should not give public expression to opinions on matters of state without consulting ministers and he should not take advice from rival politicians in matters of

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call for; c) if the President so requires, to submit for the consideration of the council of ministers any matter on which a decision has been taken by a minister but which has not been considered by the council.

Clearly the measure of the obligation will necessarily depend on the nature and extent of the President's rights. The rationale of Article 78 is to enable the President to effectively play his legitimate constitutional role, no less but also no more.

What is that role? Not that of a figurehead, nor a mere rubber stamp but that of a sage counsellor, a friend, philosopher and guide of the nation (not the ruling party) who, though ultimately has to accept ministerial advice, has also the right to advise the ministry to change its mind and tread the correct path or modify its stand or soften its stance. Success in this role will depend upon the stature and personality of the President and the techniques employed by him vis-a-vis the ministry which can range from gentle persuasion to angry protests.

It is argued that the information which the President may call for will depend upon the ministry's decision and advice about what and how much information should be conveyed to him. Such a one-sided interpretation would deprive Article 78 of all efficacy and is unsound. The object of Article 78 is not to satisfy idle presidential curiosity. The information called for by the President must be "relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union and proposals for legislation." In view of this express limitation, information cannot extend to matters like whether the ministers recite their daily prayers or whether the Prime Minister prefers the music of Miles Davis to Dizzy Gillespie. So far so good.

But is there any other implied limitation on the President's right to call for information? That is the vexed question to which no dogmatic answer can be given. It is, however, arguable that limitation is implicit in the very nature of the President's constitutional role and the underlying purpose of Article 78. The nature of the information called for must be within the legitimate, constitutional functions and hence have nexus with the same.

THE rationale of communicating to the President, the decisions arrived at by the ministry and furnishing information is to afford him an opportunity to exercise his constitutional role of an adviser and also of constitutional criticism with regard to all affairs of the Union. But if his pleas and protests have not prevailed with the ministry, then that is the end of the matter. He cannot obstruct or thwart the measure, much less veto it, or seek information to that end. Again it is not his constitu-

tional function to dismiss a government which enjoys the confidence of the house nor can he do so on the slippery ground that the government has ceased to represent the wishes of the electorate because in most cases the President would not be sufficiently equipped to arrive at such an assessment with any degree of certainty.

Besides, any error of judgment would be ruinous to himself and the presidency which would be regarded by the public as having become a football of contending political factions.

The President also cannot dismiss a duly elected government on the ground of incapacity, unfitness or corruption for the simple reason that he has no such disciplinary jurisdiction. Such a course could have been contemplated in 19th century England when William IV talked about "his government". Prince Albert rhetorically asked "is the sovereign not the natural guardian of the honour of his country?...." And Stockmar theorised that the sovereign in England should enjoy "the position of a permanent premier, who takes rank above the temporary head of the cabinet, and in matters of discipline exercises supreme authority." These antiquated notions have no place in present-day Britain. The dismissal of a duly-elected government on such grounds would be untenable and regarded as an act of constitutional folly.

According to some English writers dismissal would be justifiable when the government is "subverting the democratic basis of the Constitution" and preventing the electorate from exercising its electoral choice by the abolition of the general elections act or discriminatory modification of the electoral system. On analysis the silent major premise of this thinking is that the king or the queen is the guardian of the

Mackintosh tells us about constitutional conventions on the part of Queen Victoria as also of George Ministers. Gladstone took the matter of appointments "it is made by the King". Balfour was more explicit that these appointments are made by the King. The view that the King could not be told little during the constitutional cabinet papers "as George VI was told little during

Constitution and also the consideration that for such constitutional breaches in England no other remedy could be found, either political or legal.

These considerations do not apply in India where the Supreme Court is the custodian of the Constitution and is entrusted with the task of upholding constitutional values and enforcing constitutional limitations, thus affording appropriate judicial redress in respect of violations of the Constitution. Moreover, by conceding such powers to the President we shall shift the real centre of power from Parliament to the President. The people's chosen representatives cannot be removed by a constitutional head.

Responsibility to the electorate has to be enforced in Parliament, not in Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is most essential that in discussing constitutional issues we must forget the actual incumbents of office. The Constitution can and will outlive its current functionaries.

Now, if dismissal of the government is not comprehended in the President's constitutional functions, it is doubtful, to say the least, if he can call for information whose sole purpose and thrust is to rake up the past and unearth evidence of governmental wrongdoing. The President is no doubt the constitutional head of the state but he is not the headmaster of a school vested with disciplinary authority to expel or discipline erring members. Neither is he a commission of enquiry charged with the function of fixing responsibility for acts of malfeasance and non-feasance and censuring the government.

THE British convention of keeping the sovereign informed has been rather flexible in practice and not infrequently observed in its breach, and at times, the very right of the sovereign

Court or any high court regarding its scope and effect.

In this context it would not be wise for either constitutional functionary to initiate any action on the basis of its own interpretation when both of them genuinely entertain divergent views about their rights and duties under Article 78.

During the last world war, Churchill was the chairman of the chiefs of staff committee through whom orders went direct to the commanders of the armed forces. Nevertheless matters of policy had to be settled by the cabinet and Churchill consulted his colleagues with regard to important operations... "but, while they gave careful consideration to the issues involved, they frequently asked not to be informed of dates and details, and indeed on several occasions stopped me when I was about to unfold these to them."

Functioning Within Constitution

By MADHU LIMAYE

IT is a well known fact that in the countries which have adopted Anglo-Saxon constitutional and legal systems, important political and economic conflicts often assume the form of legal controversies. Similarly, quite a few apparently constitutional questions have political dimensions. The current differences between the President and the Prime Minister are neither purely constitutional in nature nor are they entirely political. What complicates matters is the absence of a warm personal equation, differences in temperament and style of functioning.

The President's reservation about the post office bill may not have originated entirely in pique, yet it cannot be denied that strained personal relations have undoubtedly made the President more adamant in his opposition towards the bill. The Prime Minister should have read the danger signal and opened a process of conciliation as some of us wanted to do. Perhaps, he thinks that with his 410 or more votes he can ride roughshod over everybody. Now the letter sent by the President to the Prime Minister has defined the battle lines. Apart from not observing the convention about briefing the President, the Giani has accused Mr Rajiv Gandhi of dereliction of duty specifically laid down on him by the Constitution. The president wrote:

It is also distressing that constitutional provisions regarding furnishing of information to the President have not been consistently followed. I have brought it to your notice that reports of some of commissions of enquiry had not been sent to me even long after their receipt by the government.

The President also wanted the Prime Minister to appraise Parliament of the true position.

In view of these charges it is difficult to understand the decision of the speaker not to allow discussion on the privilege issue nor the ruling of the Rajya Sabha chairman to forbid members referring to names of the dignitaries. Both these presiding officers are bound by their oath. Their attitude amounts to their conniving in the violation of Article 78 of the Constitution. Confidentiality relates to advice tendered by the ministers, not to the duty of the Prime Minister to provide information under article 78. No rule of procedure or the presiding authorities' residuary power (Rule 388) allows them to act in violation of the Constitution. Lok Sabha Rule 352 (VI) and Rajya Sabha Rule 238 (VI) are not germane to this case. These rules only mean that if you wished to oppose a certain tax you would not be allowed to sway the house by saying that the President also agreed with you. The rules do not say that encroachments on the President's right and dereliction of duty by the Prime Minister cannot be discussed.

Glorified Cipher

President is not the head of the government. He wields no administrative powers. He must be guided by the advice of his ministers in the matter of executive functions. The amendment of Article 74(1) has put

the matter beyond doubt.

Does this mean that the head of the state in parliamentary democracy is a non-entity? Or, as Ivor Jennings put it, "a nodding automation"? Or, as Justice Krishna Iyer phrased it, 'A glorified cipher'? Constitutional writers have said that the President has to act as the guide, friend and philosopher of the Prime Minister, that he can advise, caution and even warn the Prime Minister.

Justice Krishna Iyer said in the 2 Samsher Singh case that the President represented "the majesty of the state", and has rapport with the people and parties. He might "chasten and correct" the government.

But flourishes of language apart what can the President concretely do if the Prime Minister and the council of ministers defy constitutional provisions and violate their oath? The oath requires the Prime Minister not only to bear "true faith and allegiance" to the Constitution but "faithfully and conscientiously to discharge his duties" as a minister.

The Constitution has in-built checks on autocratic power. Article 75 (1) confers on the President the power to appoint a Prime Minister.

Nobody has contended that he has to do this on "advice" referred to in Article 74(1). Article 75 (2) says that ministers shall hold office during "the pleasure of the President". Nobody can maintain that this "pleasure" will be determined on the advice of the cabinet. Then is the President's pleasure a licence to exercise arbitrary power? No. There is the provision of collective responsibility under Article 75 (3), which means that all these provisions should be harmonised. If the Prime Minister violates the Constitution, if he throws all norms and propriety to the winds, humiliates the President, civil servants and judges, and if the Parliament prolongs itself on some or the other, the President can, at his own peril, take the matter to the people and let them decide on the action of the Prime Minister and the attitude of a temporary majority which owes its existence, sometimes, to conditions of emotional stress.

Article 61 Remedy

The ultimate sovereign in our country is neither the Prime Minister nor the President nor even the Parliament, it is the electorate. In the face of an arrogant Prime Minister, a rubber stamp speaker and slavish ruling party MPs, an appeal can be made to the electorate as the political and "Constitutional" tribunal of last resort. The President can dismiss the Prime Minister for violating the Constitution and appoint a new Prime Minister, who either obtains the confidence of the House or advises the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and take the matter to the people. But such

pleasure of a "increase the to operate within reasonable and proper limits. Similarly, support of the existing majority does not give licence to the Prime Minister to act as a dictator."

President Vs. PM

Sir.—The article "India In A Trap" by Mr Girilal Jain (March 18) is a sad reminder of the mess we have made of the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy.

The adage that "some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them" is unfortunately quite an apt description of the plight of our young Prime Minister. Greatness has been thrust upon him with the result that unlimited power has come into his hands. With no experience whatever in the field of politics, he has been pitchforked into an august office.

Though it is not quite clear whether the President has really been humiliated by the Prime Minister, the fact remains that the President needs to be kept informed on important national matters even though he is expected to abide by the advice of the Union council of ministers.

One can surmise that the fathers of our Constitution neither wanted a rubber-stamp President nor an assertive and dominating one who may cross the rubicon of constitutional propriety. Even President

Rajendra Prasad, who never saw eye to eye with Prime Minister Nehru, referred to the Law Commission the issue regarding the powers of the President.

However, I feel that Mr Jain is off the mark in terms of nuances when he observes that Netaji lost to Gandhiji because "the Indian people do not admire those who do not respect their elders and seniors." Netaji did defeat Gandhiji's nominee in the Presidential election of the Congress party in 1939.

JOHN ALEXANDER
Mussorie.

II

Sir,—I can't but agree with the views expressed by Mr Girilal Jain in his article "India In a Trap."

The present controversy about the President's letter proves once again that the sanctity enjoyed by conventions have lost their original glint. The prime purpose of accommodating conventions in the Constitution is simply to avoid vacuum at any point of time in the running of the government. Though these conventions do not have any legal backing, they certainly have moral support in the country and that is enough to give them a legitimate place in our socio-political life.

After all, the President is also a human being deemed to remain above politics. But given the fluidity of the Indian political scene, how can we expect him to arrest his feelings? Although it is still unclear who leaked the letter, what matters is that it was known that the President was trying to give vent to his feelings for a long time. For a far-sighted Prime Minister this should have served as a signal to modify his behaviour towards the President.

ANDLEEB Z. NAQVI

constitutional rights to complain against his not being kept informed and briefed on important national matters. It is also his prerogative to counter the patently false statement of the Prime Minister in Parliament. Constitutionally speaking the President is an integral part of Parliament and therefore the Prime Minister should have acted with caution while talking about his relationship with the President.

BADRUL ISLAM

PM's Behaviour

Sir.—Mr Girilal Jain's article "India In A Trap" (March 18) is thought provoking. It is a lucid exposition of the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister. Once upon a time I was a great admirer of Mr Rajiv Gandhi and was of the opinion that he would emulate the way of life and personal character of his grand father, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But slowly the erosion set in.

The astounding success of the Congress in the general elections in January 1985 seems to have gone to Mr Gandhi's head. He started braking the convention of meeting the President once every month. When this was pointed out to him by the press, he is reported to have exclaimed that he had broken many other conventions as well. The situation seems to have reached a climax now and the Prime Minister appears to have been cornered as a result of his own pronouncements in the Lok Sabha. His credibility is eroding fast and this is very unfortunate for the country.

JOGINDER SINGH

New Delhi.

II

Sir.—Mr Girilal Jain has said some homotruths. He is right when he says that "treachery is inherent in sycophancy". Only self-respecting men who are willing and able to speak out their minds can be depended upon to be loyal in adversity.

What we are witnessing in the country today is most unfortunate because any conflict between the head of the state and the head of the government, irrespective of what is contained in the Constitution, is bound to cause serious damage to the body politic.

Politics is a strange animal and nobody can predict its course. When Mr Zail Singh was chosen as Presidential candidate by Mrs Indira Gandhi, a number of intellectuals had their reservations about her choice. He almost seemed to have repaid this obligation by making Mr Rajiv Gandhi the Prime Minister against established norms. It should be clear to anyone that what is happening now is not a question of mere principles but a result of selfishness, immaturity and lack of clear perceptions.

One can only hope that the two most important dignitaries will forget their petty personal interests and save the country further agony.

New Delhi.

V. SAGAR

III

Sir.—I am afraid that Mr Girilal Jain is wrong in saying that Mr Sanjiva Reddy had ignored Mr Jagjivan Ram's superior claims to forming the government and invited Mr Charan Singh to do so instead. The facts are that Mr Reddy invited Mr Charan Singh when he found that a large number of MPs suggested his name and not Mr Jagjivan Ram's name since Mr Desai continued to be Janata parliamentary party leader, Mr Charan Singh's list included names of many MPs who said that they did not support Mr Desai. Mr Desai resigned after Mr Charan Singh's appointment as Prime Minister and it was after this incident that Mr Jagjivan Ram was elected the leader of the Janata party. This is recent history and prejudices against Mr Charan Singh should not be allowed to distort facts.

SATYA PRAKASH
MALAVIYA, MP
General Secretary,
Lok Dal

New Delhi.

IV

Sir.—In your candid editorial "Confrontation Is On" (March 14) you have correctly put the primary blame on the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, for the unfortunate controversy over the estranged relations between him and the President. This wrangle between the head of the State and the head of the government has not only lowered the image of parliamentary democracy in India but has also brought ignominy to the prestige of the country in the international arena.

The electorate of this country is equally responsible for this sordid drama. Swayed by emotional appeals, it offered a brute majority to political novices in Parliament. With a vast majority of MPs at his beck and call, the Prime Minister thinks that he need not care for anything—not even for well-established conventions. He heaps insult on upright bureaucrats in front of their juniors, replaces his foreign secretary during a press conference, pats an M.P. who had accused the President of India of harboring anti-nationals on the back by elevating him to a ministerial post, misleads Parliament by declaring that he has informed the President of all the important happenings even when the truth is otherwise. And he has no regrets for these acts.

Congress MPs do not care to attend the Parliament. It does not seem to bother them that there is often a lack of quorum in Parliament because of their absence.

A.K. SHARMA

Chandigarh.

V

Sir.—For once, the Congress statement on the President-Prime Minister controversy seems to have hit the nail on the head. There are no short cuts to power, especially for a opposition whose strength in Parliament is well below that of the ruling party. For the controversy to have crystallized into a crisis the opposition parties should have had a strength comparable to the Congress, with perhaps a few Independents being able to sway the pendulum one way or the other. The way things are in the Lok Sabha, Mr Gandhi has little cause to worry. It is another of those storms in a tea cup, so common in the drawing rooms of Delhi and Bombay.

RANJAN GUPTA

New Delhi.

PM's Blunders

Sir.—Mr Girilal Jain in his article "Political Upheaval in India—Rajiv's Blunder After Blunder" (March 25) has said that the Prime Minister's aides have insinuated that "the Thakkar Commission had made critical references to the Giani of Mrs Indira Gandhi". According to Mr Jain, these charges and interpretations have found their way into print in a number of publications.

By making such insinuations against the President of India, the Prime Minister and his aides now stand condemned in the eyes of the public. They need to answer a number of questions publicly. Why, for example, were they silent for so long about this issue relating to the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi? And who suppressed the Thakkar Commission report, the President or the Prime Minister? And what right had the government to withhold the Thakkar Commission report from the President of India when he has asked for it?

Mr Rajiv Gandhi has been tolerated by the Indian people for too long. They cannot suffer him any more. He will have to quit much sooner than Mr Jain foresees.

TAPESHWAR NATH ZUTSH
New Delhi

II

Sir.—I have read the article "Political Upheaval In India" by Mr Girilal Jain (March 25) and I appreciate the comments made by him.

However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that one of the main motifs of Indian civilization "Satyameva Jayate" referred to in the article has been incompletely used in our country. This is a profound statement from one of our Upanishads and in its full form it reads as follows, "Satyameva Jayate Naanrutam". This means "Truth alone prevails, not untruth".

NALIN K. VISSANJI

Bombay.

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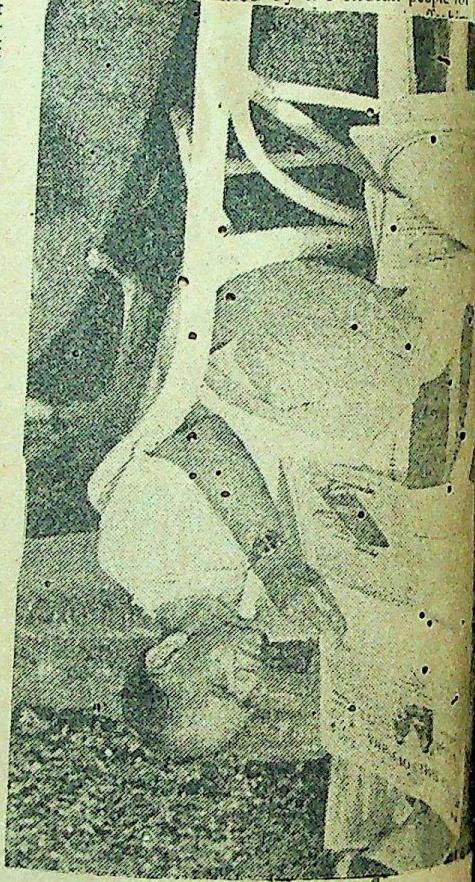
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agues and I in the Constituent Assembly considered this matter and we depart from the British precedent by written constitution which gave the Powers in excess of what the British sovereign under Britain's unwritten constitution created a President who was, in my opinion, halfway between the British Crown and President, not of course the head of the state as in the USA under the presidential system, but certainly not a puppet or a figure-

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constitutional authority, Dicey, had to say in his classic work about the right of the Crown to dissolve Parliament:

There are certainly combinations of circumstances under which the Crown has the right to dismiss a ministry who command a parliamentary majority and to dissolve the Parliament by which the ministry are supported. The reason why the House can in accordance with the Constitution be deprived of power and of existence is that an occasion has arisen in which there is a fair reason to suppose that the opinion of the House is not the opinion of the electors. A dissolution is in its essence an appeal from the legal to the political sovereign.

A consensus has emerged in England among the experts that the Crown has an unfettered discretion to accept or reject the Prime Minister's advice to dissolve Parliament but that this right would be exercised only in exceptional circumstances. Dr. Arthur Barriedale Kieth holds the view that the Crown is clearly not bound to grant dissolution when asked for. The same view was held by Sir Ivor Jennings, another authority on the subject, who objected to the sovereign

Roots Of

confidence of the House of Commons. Thirdly, if the ministry is guilty of conduct that justly calls for dismissal. Naturally, in all cases, the electorate must be asked to give its verdict and that verdict must be respected.

This view extends as far back as the commentaries of Lord Halsbury who wrote: "In cases where the ministry still retains the confidence of the House of Commons, but the Crown has reason to believe that the latter no longer represents the sense of the electorate, the dismissal of the ministry or the dissolution of Parliament would be constitutional; and cases of emergency might conceivably arise where, through the unfitness or incapacity of the ministry, the exercise of the power of dismissal would be constitutional, justifiable and proper, in order to prevent the adoption of some course to the nation."

To turn to our own Constitution, Article 74 reads:

There shall be a council of ministers, with the Prime Minister at the head, to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions.

Article 75 provides:

(1) The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President and the other ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime

ministers. That does not however take away from his legal and constitutional right to override the cabinet whenever he feels called upon to do so and to face the consequences.

Indeed Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, gave expression to this view when, on May 23, 1949, he said that Article 74 (i) "does not lay down that the President is bound to accept the advice."

For anyone to argue that the Constituent Assembly gave the President no independence and wanted him to accept the "advice" of the Prime Minister and cabinet even when he wanted to overrule or dismiss them is to imply that my distinguished colleagues in the Constituent Assembly were all nincompoops!

There was a proposal at one stage that an Instrument of Instructions for the guidance of both the President and the governors should be prepared. It was specifically laid down in the draft Instrument that, for the purpose of making certain appointments, the advice of the government of the day would not be taken but that the President would be advised by an advisory board of 15 members of Parliament in the matter of making certain appointments under the Constitution. It was suggested that the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court

Nehru sat next to him on the sofa and, after talking about the weather and such like, the President said he came to the point. He had hardly developed his thesis when, within a couple of minutes, the Prime Minister looked at his watch, professed to remember that he had another engagement to keep, and asked to be excused. That, said Dr. Radhakrishnan to me, was Nehru's way of telling the President to mind what he thought was his business.

I therefore asked for an interview with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, whom I had known from as far back as 1934. After we had both taken our seats, the President asked me in Hindustani: "What is it you wish to talk to me about?" I said I had come to make a complaint. "Against whom?" he asked. "Against you," I said. "Against me?" he asked. "What is your complaint?"

I proceeded to tell him that he had let down his high office and in particular his position under the Constitution as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. I asked him what he did when the defence minister and the Prime Minister were ganging up against the chief of army staff. Did he call the parties concerned to try and find out the rights and wrongs of the matter and restore discipline, or did he allow himself to be ignored when it was for him to assert himself?

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that the attorney general was the only competent interpreter of the terms of the Constitution. There were eminent international jurists in India, England and elsewhere to whom the President could turn. The President could submit these issues for the opinion of such international experts and, if they supported his point of view, why should he not publish them and bring the matter to public notice? At this point, I could not get any response and the interview ended.

I ran into the President's secretary, A. V. Pai, a member of the ICS, not long after. I told him about my conversation with the President and asked him why he at least had not encouraged the President to assert himself. Mr. Pai's reply was significant. He said that when the President was chafing at the manner in which the Prime Minister was ignoring him over the Thimayya incident, he suggested that the President pick up the phone, speak to Nehru and ask him to report to him about the matter or to send Krishna Menon and Thimayya to do so. The President shirked this challenge as he obviously

Has Indian democracy elect as the next President personality who is not a stooge, continue to allow sycophancy, sink to the level of an Afro-A

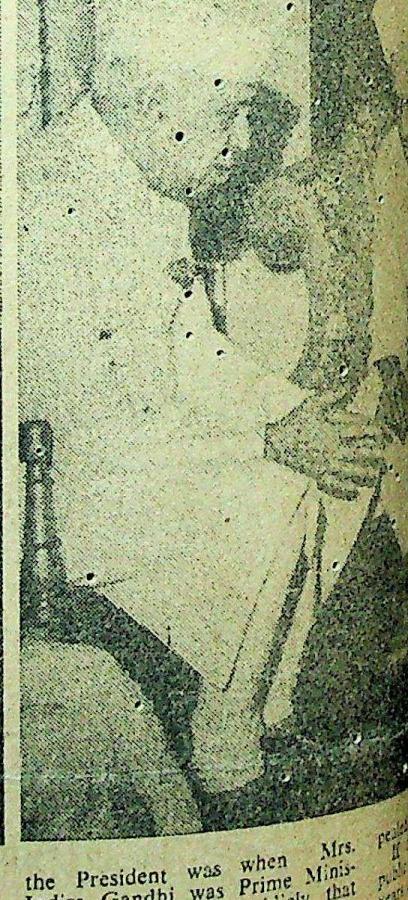
minister well before the Chinese did that job for us in 1962, he told me of an incident when he had made such an effort and the sad manner in which it had ended.

He said he had made up his mind to talk to Nehru about Krishna Menon and warn him about the dangers involved in his being put in charge of India's defence. Nehru sat next to him on the sofa and, after talking about the weather and such like, the President said he came to the point. He had hardly developed his thesis when, within a couple of minutes, the Prime Minister looked at his watch, professed to remember that he had another engagement to keep, and asked to be excused. That, said Dr. Radhakrishnan to me, was Nehru's way of telling the President to mind what he thought was his business!

The next occasion when I

had to deal with the position of

President-PM CI



the President were not being given due weight. He, in turn, complained about the Prime Minister treating him as if he were the British Crown. I asked Dr. Rajendra Prasad whether that was his understanding of the Constitution and reminded him that we had both had a little hand in the matter, he as President of the Constituent Assembly and I as a humble member. I expressed the view that, as I understood it, the President of the Union stood somewhere between the British Crown on one side and the President of the USA on the other and that in particular his position "as the

felt he would be snubbed by Nehru and was not prepared for a public confrontation.

Later, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was to raise the issue publicly. Addressing the Indian Law Institute on November 28, 1960, he said: "There is no provision in the Indian Constitution which in so many words lays down that the President shall be bound to act in accordance with the advice of his ministers." He criticised attempts "to invoke and incorporate into our written Constitution by interpretation the conventions of the British Constitution, which is an unwritten Constitution."

the President was when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister. She had said publicly that the President should be "acceptable" to her. When I, as leader of the Opposition in 1957, with the support of all opposition parties, nominated Chiet Justice Subba Rao as our candidate for the presidency as against her candidate, Dr. Zakir Hussain, in the course of a conversation with me she observed: "I thought Minoo, you had high regard for Zakir Saheb. Why then are you opposing his election as President?" My reply was: "Yes, I do have great regard for Dr.

Minoo, but little for the top echelons of the government. The

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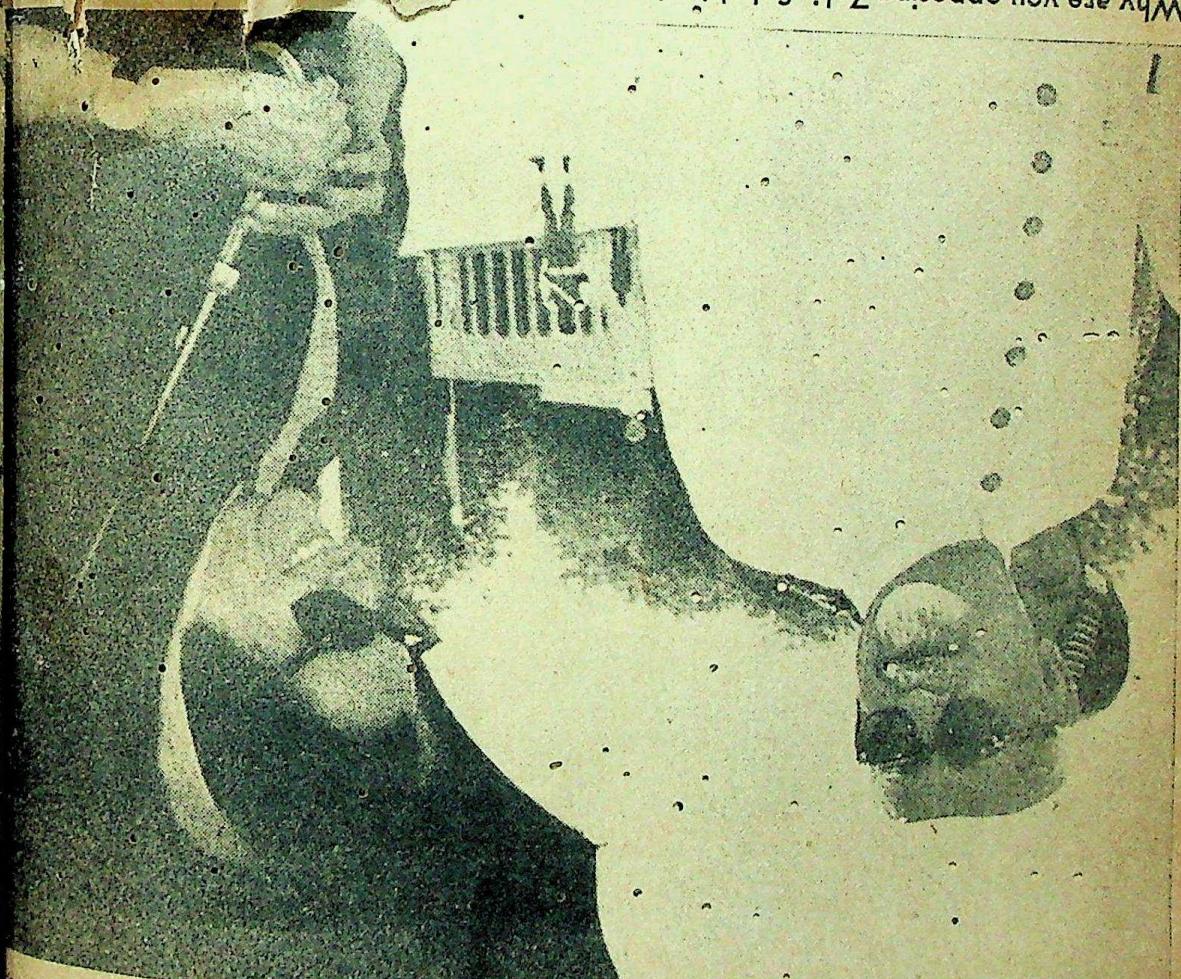
Procession

The office of President enjoys great
but little power. No wonder then that
the eminent men who have adorned the
have chafed at their largely titular
the top of the political pyramid.

But the successive prime ministers have always tried to see to it that the president of their choice. The attempt has been successful. And on one occasion, when it did succeed, it turned out a tragic event, leading to the first Constitutional paving the way for Mrs. Gandhi's



"Why are you opposing Zakir Sahib's election as President?" Indira asked. I said, "Because India should violate the Constitution as President." Zaki Sahib would never dismiss you if you need a President who can't ever dismiss you if you need a President," No one accepted.



that this was unfair to the general and bad for the morale of the armed forces. I therefore asked for an interview with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, whom I had known from as far back as 1934. After we had both taken our seats, the President asked me in Hindustani: "What is it you wish to talk to me about?" I said I had come to make a complaint. "Against whom?" he asked. "Against you," I said. "Against me?" he asked. "What is your complaint?"

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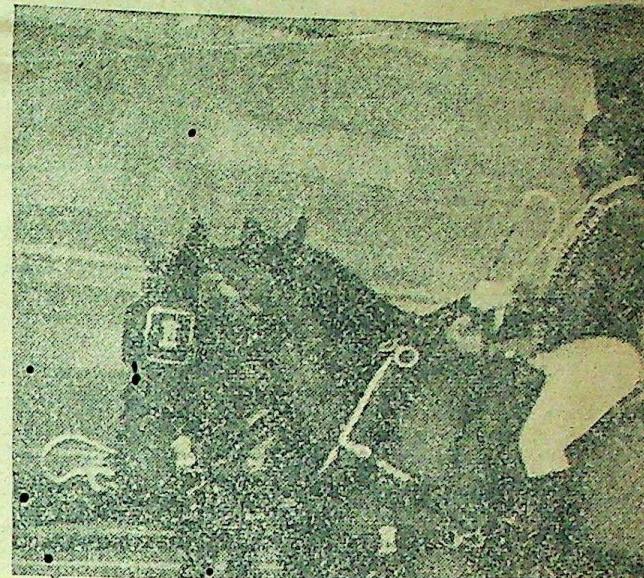
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Procession

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d paving the way for Mrs. Gandhi's

Why are You opposing Zakir Sahab's election as President? I asked. I said, "because India needs a President who can dismiss you if you should violate the Constitution as Zaki Sahab would never dismiss a President who can't do it," ed and said, "No, of course



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backdrop, and in view of the imminent poll, INDER MALHOTRA examines the record of the six presidents who have so far held office and examines the re-ownen them and the successive five of whom there have been only two caretakers, Mr. Charan



DENTAL CREAM

Flash a smile. Pass it on.

fresher your breath
the moment you start
brushing your teeth,
and will leave your

fresh. No wonder Flash won the world selection award in Vienna for its quality.

comes in Flash will
brighten your healthy
smile day after day.

A Thought for The Day

A Procession Of

(Continued from Page 1)

making black money. So this class begs, borrows, mortgages its future, just to get a roof over its head. This class hates to pay it; it's an act of violence on their sense of what is right and just; they curse, grumble, torment, and torture themselves but in the end they have to shell out their hard-earned money in black, forced to become dishonest cheats creating unaccounted money.

The Pavement Culture

In contrast, take the pavement dwellers and their culture. They ask for no loans will get none, they ask for no subsidies and will get none, they ask for no reservations in employment or in schools, they ask for nothing, not even electricity or water. They live within their means and if it is the pavements they can afford, it is the pavements it will be. As Gandhiji said 'needs' and not 'wants.' They are the true followers of Gandhiji, unlike the khadi-clad relics who preach Gandhism, but give Rs. 8 crores to a sanglee to make a celluloid Gandhiji, dabble in black money and spawn evils of a degree that the pavement dwellers will never equal.

The pavement dwellers, like the slum dwellers, are a consequence of the government's total callousness on the housing front. As Mr. Sakhthakar himself has said the supply of new housing units is only 15,000 annually against a demand of 60,000, not to mention the backlog which has been 4.5 lakh units in the last decade. The government has totally forgotten the 79 per cent of the population of Bombay that earns less than Rs. 600 a month. They are the ones on the pavements and in the poorer slum pockets. How can the government or its paid employees like the Municipal Commissioner and the Police Commissioner penalise the poor, economically weaker sections of people for their own crimes of neglect. What moral right have they got?

Incidentally, the dig about "fashionable social worker looking for a cause" betrays a wrong analysis of the whole issue. To me the pavement dwellers issue is a monumental, non-violent, passive resistance movement, a kind of civil disobedience by a people who don't want to compromise on black money, against a government that perpetuates an economic policy, particularly a housing policy, that benefits only the black money-wallahs. This is not social work but part of a struggle for the rights of the down-trodden.

Unlike his predecessors, Mr. Reddy has written his memoirs which he hopes to publish soon after returning home to Anantpur after relinquishing office. This should greatly enliven the discussions on presidents and presidential powers if, as is generally expected, Mr. Reddy has not restrained from pulling his punches.

on a prolonged foreign tour. Once again brushing aside protocol, President Prasad decided to drive to Palam personally to see off the Prime Minister. To heighten the effect of the presidential gesture, Panditji was not told of it in advance. He arrived at the airport greeted all those present, looked at his watch and declared that it was time for his party to start boarding the plane. The President's military secretary requested him to wait as the President was on his way.

Nehru shrugged his shoulders and waited. But being a stickler for punctuality, he was clearly uneasy. He looked at his watch again and again. He fretted and fumed. It was at departure time but there is still no sign of the President. Nehru said he must take off without further delay. A mortified military secretary entreated him not to do so. The President had left Rashtrapati Bhavan and should be arriving any moment he pleaded.

Delayed Departure

"Is he walking?" demanded Panditji testily, as presidential limousine drove onto the tarmac. The President and the Prime Minister made to greet each other cordially enough before Panditji's delayed departure.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's succession to Dr. Prasad is a foregone conclusion. His qualities to be head of state are obvious, indeed overwhelming; he had risen to the top rather belatedly by his own efforts—entirely because of Nehru's sponsorship and support. It is for this reason that he went on during his presidency as instructive as that of Dr. Prasad's.

Not to put too fine point on it, Dr. Radhakrishnan proved that a President who virtually a nominee of the minister does not necessarily good relations with his or after he is ensconced in Rashtrapati Bhavan. In Dr. Krishnan's case estrangement Panditji was particularly tragic painful because it coincided with the start of Nehru's 12 years.

The Chinese invasion of Ladakh and NEFA called Arunachal Pradesh) soon after Dr. Radhakrishnan's arrival

at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He was unrelenting in denouncing Panditji for "credulity and negligence". In private he was even more harsh. Indeed he succumbed to the temptation of partaking in political intrigue aimed at clipping the Prime Minister's wings, if not replacing him with a war council, headed by (guess who?) the President!

Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister for much too short a time. With Mrs. Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan's relations were extremely cordial to begin with. In an interview to the well-known Egyptian journalist, Mr. Heikal, the President described her as the "prettiest Prime Minister in the world." But soon enough Dr. Radhakrishnan became vocal in his criticism of her government and Mrs. Gandhi made no secret of her opinion that he should not have a second term.

Dr. Zakir Husain both lent distinction to the office of President and rescued it from the arena of controversy and intrigue in high places. He had his views, of course, and he certainly did not lack the courage of his conviction. But he had the good sense to give his advice quietly and in private rather than air his differences with the government in public. But his was a sadly short-lived tenure.

Ironically, it was his untimely death that plunged the presidency into the vortex of the most tumultuous controversy it has been embroiled in so far.

Enter, Mr. V. V. Giri who knew that he had won because Mrs. Gandhi, ditching her party's official nominee, Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, had thrown her support behind him. But he pretended that he had become President on his own.

He was the first incumbent of the presidency publicly to use the fashionable phrase, "Rubber-stamp President," proclaiming that he would not be one and thus casting an unwarranted slur on his predecessors. He could also be contentious. He was opposed to several measures of Mrs. Gandhi's government, especially those designed to crush the railwaymen's strike in 1974. But he wisely refrained from coming to a head-on clash with the government on this score. In the end he signed all the ordinances placed before him. Three years after his retirement Mr. Giri wrote an article on his experience in Rashtrapati Bhavan as

well as on that Dr. Ambedkar came to foundry fight with executing the wrong. But he was that even within the President's stance, defecting from a wrong rather than enacting a proper law or doing the same time he was to admit that it needed to consider it necessary such a protest against the rail strike when Kripalani strongly do so.

No president had so sharply polarized even post the late Mr. Ahmed. It was to sign the internal emergency stifling June night seven years ago, harness a few feelings against him.

Dramatic Vindication

Now, however, a change seems to be as his memory is one of the critics of Gopal's elevation to be offered have, in fact, raised whether he could be of qualms that Mrs. Gopalkar undoubtedly did about things that happened.

In Mr. Sanjiva Reddy as president, and that consensus, there was an dramatic vindication of irony. As the duly elected date of the then undivided Congress party in 1969, he done down by Mrs. Gopalkar yet, eight years later, of his main supporters Morarji Desai became minister he too from sponsoring Mr. Desai's candidature for the president. But he was successfully by other Janata leaders.

Relations between and Mr. Desai, never deteriorated as the then Prime Minister Kanti Desai, started his faltering attention. For counts the President his words about these

whether he would have liked to impose President of the whole country if there was a constitutional problem.

How does one sum up the experience? It be appropriate to say that the equation between the president and the prime minister is more likely to be one of the final analysis a great deal depends on the ties who occupy the respective chairs. A president can have his way if the prime minister is sure of his position. But a president who is maintaining the dignity of the office can do damage to the institution itself.

HEAD OF STATE MORE THAN A MERE FIGUREHEAD

REAL POWER MAY BE EXERCISED THROUGH INTER-STATE COUNCIL

By B. SHIVA RAO

A PERUSAL of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and of the Union Constitution Committee throws light on the processes through which the provisions of the Constitution were passed before emerging in their final form. The Constitutional Adviser, Sir B. N. Rau, had visualized, in his first draft, a President armed with certain discretionary powers. In the discharge of his special responsibilities, he would not necessarily act in accordance with the advice of his Council of Ministers.

Three subjects were mentioned by the Constitutional Adviser as appropriate for inclusion in the discretionary field: prevention of a grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of the Union or any part thereof; safeguarding of the financial stability and credit of the Union Government; safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities.

Perhaps the use of the terms "special responsibilities" and "in his discretion" in the first draft was unfortunate. Leading members of the Constituent Assembly like Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Mr B. G. Kher and Mr S. K. Sinha had unpleasant memories of the Governors' special responsibilities in the 1935 Constitution and the controversy over their exercise, which prevented for some months the formation of Congress Ministries in 1937, until a suitable formula had been evolved acceptable to Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee. Moreover, the country had a bitter experience of the arbitrary manner in which Lord Linlithgow exercised his authority for seven years (1936-1943), regarding his Executive Councillors as mere departmental heads. Much of the trouble that arose over the Cripps offer in 1942 was due to the narrow and illiberal manner in which the Viceroy had interpreted his functions and powers.

ECHO OF 1935

Sir B. N. Rau based his proposals on the relevant provision of the 1935 Constitution. But even under that Act a Governor was to be guided by the Instrument of Instructions and report to the Viceroy any matter which seemed relevant to one of his special responsibilities. I can recall a situation which developed in India soon after the installation of Congress Ministries in six or seven provinces in 1937. Charges of ill-treatment of Muslims were made against one or two of these Ministries, and a report was published about "Congress atrocities" perpetrated on the Muslims, prepared by the Raja of Piplur. After a talk with Dr Rajendra Prasad and with his approval, I suggested to the Viceroy the appointment of a committee of inquiry presided over by Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. The Viceroy's reply was significant: no complaint of such ill-treatment had reached him from any Governor, he told me, and the appointment of such a committee of inquiry might suggest failure on the part of the Governor of the province concerned to act on his special responsibility.

There were other members of the Constituent Assembly, non-Congressmen, like Mr N. Gopala-Swami Ayyangar, Mr Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and Dr K. M. Munshi, who for reasons of their own favoured rejection of Sir B. N. Rau's proposals. Dr Munshi reminded the Assembly: "During the last one hundred years Indian public life has largely drawn upon the traditions of British constitutional law. Most of us, and during the last several generations public men in India, have looked up to the British model as the best."

In the memorandum on the principles of the Union Constitution Mr Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and Mr N. Gopala-Swami Ayyangar specifically suggested that the executive power of the Central Government would subject to the provisions of the Constitution, be exercised by, on the authority of, a Council of Ministers, to be called the Cabinet, which would be responsible to the lower Chamber of the Central Legislature elected by franchise.

In justification of the proposal to create for the President a field of "special responsibilities" to be exercised in his discretion

Sir B. N. Rau circulated a note in which occurred the following passage: "Although under responsible government the Head of the State acts for the most part on the advice of Ministers responsible to the Legislature, nevertheless there are certain matters in which he is entitled to exercise his own discretion, e.g. (in certain events) the choice of a Prime Minister and in the dissolution of Parliament. In India such matters as the appointment of judges, the protection of minorities and the suppression of widespread disorder may properly be added to the list; of course, it may not be always possible for the President to use his discretionary powers. Thus a Ministry may threaten to resign if, in the exercise of discretionary power, he overrules them; in that case, the President can do so only if he has the support of the Legislature and can get an alternative Ministry enjoying its confidence. Failing this, he can dissolve the Legislature and appeal to the electorate in an extreme case. Thus the discretionary powers would at least give the President a chance of appealing to the Legislature, and, in the last resort, to the people".

(This article is based on a speech delivered by Sir B. N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser, to the Inter-State Council based on the British model, to advise him in the discharge of a special responsibility. Its composition was to include the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, if any, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the presiding officers of the two Houses of Legislature and the Attorney-General; such of the former Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chief Justices as were willing and able to act; and such other persons, not more than seven, as might be appointed by the President. (Members so appointed were to hold office only for the duration of the tenure of the President who appointed them.)

A Council of State so constituted could serve, it was suggested, other purposes such as superintendence, direction and control of elections and appointment of judges.

The Union Constitution Committee decided, however, to reject the entire scheme. It preferred the parliamentary form of government with no special powers vested in the President. All his functions were to be exercised only on the advice of the Cabinet, including dissolution of the Lower House of Parliament. Mr Nehru was firm in his opposition to any variation from this important provision. He told the Assembly: "That raises a very fundamental issue of what form you are going to give to your Constitution, the Ministerial, parliamentary type or the American type. So far we have been proceeding with the building up of the Constitution in the Ministerial sense and we cannot go back upon it."

Dr Ambedkar was even more explicit in introducing the draft Constitution in the Assembly on behalf of the Drafting Committee: "In the Draft Constitution there is placed at the head of the Indian Union a functionary who is called the President of the Union. The title of this functionary reminds one of the President of the United States. But beyond identity of names there nothing in common between

FINAL POSITION

After the final adoption of the Constitution, Sir B. N. Rau interpreted the position of the President in the following terms: "It is clear from Article 74(I) that it is the function of the Council of Ministers to advise the President over the whole of the Central field. Nothing is left to his discretion or excepted from that field by this article. By way of contrast, see Article 163, which is the corresponding provision for Governors and which expressly excepts certain matters in which the Governor is, by or under the Constitution, required to act in his discretion. There is no such exception in the case of the President.

"Moreover, Article 75(3) makes the Council of Ministers responsible to the House of the People. If, therefore, the President acted contrary to advice, the Ministers would either resign, or, since the advice tendered reflected the views of the House of the People, they would be thrown out of office by the House of People. For the same reason, no one else would then be able to form a Government. The President would, therefore, be compelled to dissolve the House. Apart from the technical difficulty of carrying out the many details of a general election in such a situation—the President might have to dismiss the Ministry and install a "caretaker" Government to co-operate with him in ordering a general election—the consequences of the election might be most serious. If the electorate should return the same Government to power, the President might be accused of having sided with the Opposition and thrown the country into the turmoil and expense of a general election in a vain attempt to get rid of a Ministry that had the support of Parliament and the people. This would gravely impair the position of the President."

ROYAL RIGHTS

Summing up his conclusion, he observed: "Does this reduce the President under the Indian Constitution to a figurehead? Far from it. Like the King in England, he will still have the right 'to be consulted, to encourage and to warn'. One can conceive of no better future for the President of India than that he should be more and more like the monarch in England, eschewing legal power, standing outside the clash of parties and gaining in moral authority."

This, however, does not mean that the President is to be, as some members of the Constituent Assembly put it, "a mere figurehead". It is open to him under the Constitution to make use of Article 263 which gives him the power to establish a Council charged with the duty of inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States; investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest; or making recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for the better coordination of policy and action with respect of that subject.

The President may establish such a Council and define the nature of the duties to be performed by it and its organization and procedure. Provided that the selection of the personnel and the functions assigned to it are done with due care and foresight, the Council may become an adequate substitute for the Privy Council of Sir B. N. Rau's original conception.

form of government prevalent in America and the form of government proposed under the draft Constitution."

Dr Ambedkar's reference to the President of the United States brought out another aspect of the position of the President in India, the method of his election. The Constitutional Adviser first thought that the election could be only by members of Parliament. Dr Munshi on the other hand favoured his direct election by adult suffrage. Mr Gopalaswami Ayyangar suggested a middle course, not so restricted as Sir Rau's proposal but not so broad-based as Dr Munshi's. A sub-committee of these four jurists, after examining various alternative methods, finally decided in favour of the formation of an electoral college consisting of all the elected members of Parliament and of all the State Legislative Assemblies, with the votes weighted in proportion to the population.

Explaining this proposal, Mr Nehru told the Assembly: "We did not want to make the President just a mere figurehead like the French President. We did not give him any real power, but we have made his position one of great authority and dignity. You will notice from this draft Constitution that he is also to be Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces just as the American President is. Now, therefore, if we had an election by adult franchise and yet did not give him any real powers, it might become slightly anomalous and there might be just an extraordinary expense of time and energy and money without any adequate result."

DUTIES AS GUARDIAN OF THE CONSTITUTION

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR AREAS OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By K. SANTHANAM

THE forthcoming elections to offices of the President and Vice-President may contribute significantly to the new political pattern which has been taking shape after the last General Election.

The previous Presidential elections were formal affairs. Dr Rajendra Prasad and Dr Radhakrishnan, though they were the nominees of the ruling party, commanded almost the universal support of members of the Opposition in Parliament and in the State legislatures. The person who contested them helped merely to bring out this fact. This time, however, there are two candidates of equal stature. Both of them are strongly backed by large sections of the Central and State legislators who constitute the electorate.

It is, however, a great pity that the nominations of these two eminent men should have been mainly on the basis of the Congress Party and the Opposition. The President of India is the symbol of national unity and integrity and his election on a party basis may spoil his image as the unchallenged representative of the entire Indian people. When the original proposal for electing him by the people on the basis of adult franchise was given up for the small electorate of legislators, one of the reasons advanced was that it would be impossible for any Presidential candidate to fight such an election except as a party candidate. It was felt that with the new electorate consisting of members of Parliament and State Assemblies, there would be no need for canvassing and that every voter in this limited electorate would be able to choose freely in the interests of the country.

BEYOND PARTY TIES

It would have been wiser for the leaders of the Congress as well as the Opposition parties to have come to an agreement that, if they could not agree upon any particular person, the choice should be left open to eminent individuals to be sponsored by groups of legislators without regard to party affiliations. Even at this late stage, I would appeal to every member of Parliament and of State Assemblies who has the right to vote to do so solely according to his conscience and discard all party whips. Already in the case of the Rajya Sabha, members of the State Assemblies have surrendered their rights as responsible representatives entrusted with the sacred task of sending men of wisdom, experience and integrity to the Upper House of Parliament and have become mere voting units for persons nominated by the party leaders. This has defeated the entire purpose of setting up the Rajya Sabha. It would be a pity if a similar situation occurs with respect to the President and he becomes a mere pawn in the hands of party bosses.

Fortunately for the country, neither Dr Zakir Husain nor Mr Subba Rao is likely to be the instrument of the parties which may put either in power. Already Mr Subba Rao has declared that he will be above all parties. As Vice-President for the last five years, Dr Zakir Husain has proved himself to be free from all

party predilections or prejudices. Still, I am afraid a bad precedent has been set by trying to organize support for either not on the basis of their individual merits but as mere nominees of their respective parties. It is not enough in the case of the President that he should, like the Speaker, function as a non-party man while in office. As will be shown later, he should function and be known to function without any obligation to any party. In fact his position is in sharp contrast to the Prime Minister who is expected to be the head of a party or a coalition of parties.

Technically, it may be possible for the same person to contest simultaneously for the two offices as is done for Parliament and the State Assemblies in the general elections. But this is not to be expected of persons who are worthy of the dignity of the Presidential office. If at any time the office of President or Vice-President becomes vacant, the elections to the two offices will thenceforward have to take place at different times, as the term of each runs for five years from the date of election which has to be held soon after the vacancy. It is a pity, therefore, that neither the Election Commission nor the Legal Department of the Government of India should have considered whether the elections could have been so arranged that the results of the Presidential election is known before nominations are filed for the Vice-President.

MAN OF MANY PARTS

Under the Constitution, the President has to play many roles. He is supreme representative of the people and he has to take the first place in all national functions, festivals and celebrations. Secondly, he is the guardian of the Constitution. Under Article 60, he has to take the oath that he will "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law" and devote himself "to the service and well-being of the people of India".

The major constitutional issue in respect of the President is whether this oath is to be considered subordinate to Article 74(1) by which the President is to be aided and advised in the exercise of his functions by a Council of Ministers with the

Prime Minister at the head. Hitherto, the general interpretation has been that the oath is a mere formality and whatever application of Article 356. A party Government at the Centre must be deemed to be consistent with the Constitution except to the extent that any action is declared illegal by the judiciary and the Supreme Court. I think it is time that this superficial interpretation is scrutinized more carefully. There is no justification for saying that the President should be merely the constitutional head when the Constitution is functioning normally, and that when, in the case of a national emergency declared under Article 352 or the supersession of a State Government under Article 356, he should be an impotent spectator.

ACT IN RESTRAINT

When an emergency is declared under Article 352, the normal Constitution is converted into a semi-dictatorship and I think the President is certainly entitled to see that this dictatorship is maintained only for the shortest possible time and is operated in the most restrained manner. It should also be his duty to revoke such proclamation as soon as the emergency is over. It may be pointed out that though Parliament has

positive power of any kind nor will he have any funds or administrative agencies to do anything against the wishes of the Government or Parliament.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

It may be embarrassing for the President to enter into personal disputes with the Prime Minister or the Home Minister regarding these appointments in the interests of all parties.

A POLITICAL FORCE TO ENSURE NATIONAL UNITY

CONVENTION CANNOT OVERRULE EXPRESSLY STATED POWERS

By DR. K. M. MUNSHI

IN view of the transformation brought about in Indian politics by the recent General Election, it is necessary to go back to the Constitution—the only sheet-anchor for the stability of the political

The form of government as it ultimately emerged from the Constituent Assembly was a composite one. Parliamentary supremacy was circumscribed, first by the distribution of legislative powers between the Centre and the States, and, secondly, by the status, powers and functions of the President expressly prescribed by the Constitution.

The Constituent Assembly categorically ruled out the suggestion that the President should be a nominee of the party in power at the Centre. He has to be above party, as he will be the choice of the nation. He represents the people of India as a whole as against the Union Ministers who are backed by only the majority party in Parliament; this makes him not only the head of the Union, but the concrete embodiment of the Union.

In a conflict between the Centre and a State, his word would be the last word. He is expected to be a political force representing national unity and is well invested with such powers and functions so that, when political parties develop inflexible attitudes, he can restrain their excesses and defend the Constitution.

The power to declare an Emergency is left to the President's "satisfaction". The word "satisfaction", juristically understood, involves the exercise of personal discretion on the part of the dignitary vested with the power, and cannot, if words make sense, be vicariously exercised. Each Emergency has to be judged by the President in the light of the circumstances in which it arises.

SPECIAL POWERS

Some of the "supra-ministerial" powers of the President are:

(1) dismissal of a Prime Minister who does not enjoy the leadership of his party;

(2) dismissal of a Ministry which has lost the confidence of Parliament;

(3) dismissal of the House of the People which appears to the President to have lost the confidence of the people;

(4) exercise of the powers of the Supreme Commander in an Emergency where the Minister has failed to defend the country.

These powers and functions are intended to enable him to take emergency action with regard to the Centre:

(a) if there is an impending constitutional break-down;

(b) if there is a grave threat to the security of the country which is not being met successfully;

(c) if the Government for the time being cannot or will not meet internal disruption successfully;

The suggestion that the powers of the President have been restricted by convention to those enjoyed by a hereditary head of State like the British Monarch is fallacious.

The allegiance owed to the British Monarch by his or her subjects is derived from sentiment and history, and the Monarch's authority and status depend upon tradition and convention. On the other hand, the authority and status of the President of India depend upon the powers he can exercise and the functions he can and should perform under and within the express provisions of the Constitution.

The British Monarch can do no wrong. The President under our Constitution can be impeached if he fails to "protect and defend" the Constitution.

The President's liability to impeachment clearly indicates that there is a sphere of action in respect of which he is personally responsible. This would negative the contention of some jurists that in all matters he is under legal obligation to accept the "aid and advice" of his Ministers.

How can a convention or precedent—or rather a unilateral decision imposed by accident of circumstances in the early phases of the post-Independence era when our parliamentary democracy was nascent—overrule the powers and functions expressly conferred by a written Constitution? Acceptance of such a convention as binding would mean that a written Constitution of a quasi-federal State can be amended in practice without undergoing the procedure prescribed for amending it.

So far, people have not worried about this aspect because there has been one-party rule throughout the country. Now that there are multi-party Governments in a number of States some of them run by parties different from the party in power at the Centre, the President will have to exercise the powers and functions expressly vested in him to maintain and uphold the Constitution.

Under the circumstances many critical situations are likely to arise:

(1) when the position of the party at the Centre is unstable;

(2) when Governors reserve their assent to controversial State legislation;

(3) when Presidential rule is imposed on a State on account of the parties in a State being evenly divided;

(4) when fissures occur in Centre-State relationships;

(5) when there is a national emergency on account of the inability of the Centre to enforce stability.

Such situations would require the President to act in exercise of his individual discretion.

The founding fathers of the Constitution took into account the possibility that some day or other, the monolithic Congress Party would break up and, to meet this contingency, incorporated in the Constitution appropriate provisions including supra-ministerial powers for the President. Mr Nehru himself stated in the Constituent Assembly that the President under our Constitution was "not a

figurehead" as under the pre-de Gaulle Constitution of France. He derives his authority from the nation represented by the electoral college consisting of the elected members of all the Legislatures in the country, which, as stated by Dr Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly debates, was "tantamount to a direct election on adult franchise".

ONE PARTY RULE

It so happened that during the last 17 years there was one party rule by the Congress and thanks to party discipline, its nominee was automatically elected President. Condition have now changed. The President will now be elected by secret ballot by legislators belonging not only to the Congress, but to a number of other parties and by Independents. It is conceivable that quite a few even among the Congress legislators might choose to follow the dictates of their own conscience in the choice of the President because the stability and security of the nation are involved in the exercise of their franchise. If that were not so, the President would be an instrument of the party in power at the Centre, directing and guiding the fortunes of the Opposition parties who happen to be in power in the States.

It has been urged that the President should be nominated by national consensus. We have had enough doses of consensus.

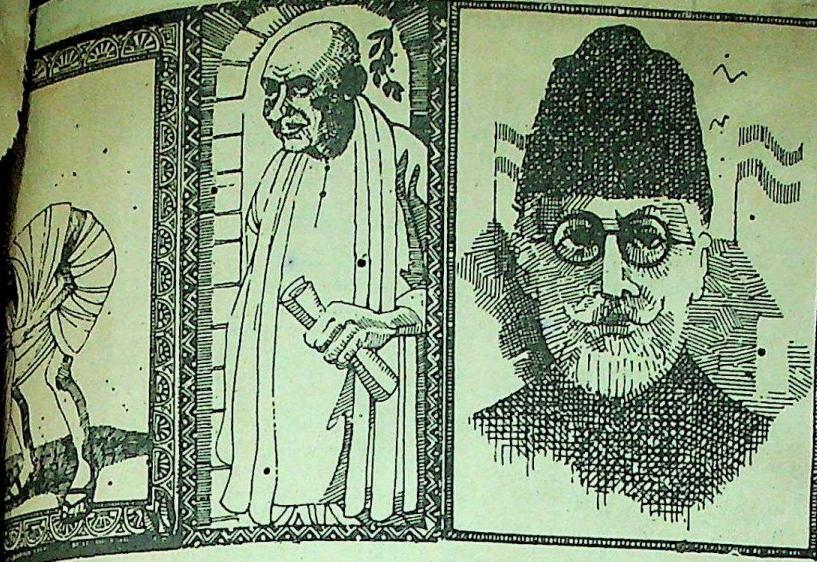
The consensus idea, which was brought into vogue by the Congress President, Mr Kamaraj, may have been justified at the time of choosing Mr Nehru's successor for foreign Powers were then expecting a breakdown in India. But once the country has settled down, consensus has no meaning; it can become a first cousin of the "democratic centralism" of the Soviet brand. Only in a secret ballot can a person cast his vote without fear or favour of party bosses.

Modern democracies are run by the action and reaction of organized political parties and in the nature of things they have first to sponsor a person for being elected as President. Once a candidate is nominated for election, he is the non-party chief of the whole nation. In the past, when the Congress was the dominant party in the whole country, it sponsored Dr Rajendra Prasad in 1952 and 1957, and Dr Radhakrishnan in 1962 for election as President. In doing so, the Congress was acting as no more than a political party.

Attention to this. When he was Chief Justice of Bombay, Mr M. C. Chagla took up an office under the Government; so did Mr Justice Fazl Ali.

But in the present case, the position is clear. The election of the President is not a party affair, nor a matter of multi-party election. The highest office in the country is not in the nature of a gift from a political party. Once nominated, the Presidential candidate does not represent a party; the supporting parties recede into the background. The nation steps in to choose its leader.

Mr Subba Rao, one of the ablest of the judges who have sat on the Bench of the Supreme Court and one of the most independent, has acted with meticulous propriety. He took two days to consider the suggestion of the parties. Having decided to stand, he submitted his resignation. Nothing could be fairer than what Chief Justice Subba Rao has done.



The Banyan Tree At 100

An escape artist if ever there was one, Sosobhai had slipped out of high society in Greece and Turkey, and to his sorrows found their security system less contemptible.

In Thailand, she was married to a man who had been a soldier in the army. They had three children: a son, a daughter, and a daughter. The family lived in a small house in a rural area. She worked as a maid for a rich family. She enjoyed working there because the family treated her well. She also enjoyed the outdoors and liked to go for walks in the forest. She was a good cook and enjoyed preparing meals for her family. She also enjoyed reading books and listening to music. She was a kind and gentle person who always tried to help others. She was a good mother and grandmother. She died at the age of 85.

be guilty of any such action as shows that it has no sense of humour or respect for its own laws. The tax evasion which follows the government breaks the law, Does it make a difference three years' notice breaks without a law.

At Escape

The Great Escape

100 Glorious Years does not go into the polemics and controversies surrounding the Congress. It was meant to celebrate the centenary of the Congress, and it exudes the festive spirit, drawing attention to the momentous events, the towering personalities and the eloquent utterances which made the history of the Congress so much the history of modern India. The authors and the editor, Dr. Zakaria, deserve thanks. A good deal of the memorability of the volume is due to the contribution of the artists whose work appears in it. Mario's endpapers are a sheer delight. So are the paintings and sketches by Husain, Hebbar and Laxman. (The AICC ought to offer them separately as collector's items as **New Statesman** did Low's cartoons.) The poems that have been included — from Bankim, Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Sarojini Naidu,

Iqbal (and from Dnyaneshwar, Kabir, Tulsidas, Guru Gobind Singh) bring out the sources of our secularism and nationalism. And specially valuable is the

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age of communal tensions and violence in several parts of the country must be a matter of the gravest concern. The problem is old, and has been well known. The important point right now is to ensure that the hatred obscurantists and other men of illwill have ignited does not spread. This is in any case the minimal duty of the Indian state. But it is because the law enforcement machinery has been allowed to fail that we witness the outbreak of communal violence again and again. Those who are in authority must attend to this task if they are not to allow an aggravation of the problem to a point where it becomes unmanageable. We could be fairly close to it.

It cannot be denied that we have not been above pandering to communalism and therefore to communalism. This also must end if the country ever to get out of the communal mire in which it is trapped. Mr. Nehru makes this point forcefully and with his long experience in the field and the government he must know what he is talking about.

ZAKARIA

We are in the communal politics; a new phenomenon has been with us since the failure of the Revolt of 1857 and the British rulers helped communities apart to act as umpire. Instead of settling one section, it aggravated another. As years passed, assumed such

positions that India

The other religious communities are also not free from communal tension. The Buddhist-Hindu confrontation in Sri Lanka can spill into certain parts of India, though so far the problem has been manageable. The situation with the Christians is also not happy; their missionaries and organisations are suspected by orthodox Hindus of widespread proselytisation, especially in the northeast. That is why there were misgivings in some quarters about the recent visit of the Pope although he came as a pilgrim of goodwill.

After the Rajiv-Longowal accord last summer, it was fervently believed that a new chapter of understanding would now open between the Hindus and the Sikhs; for sometime the euphoria that the accord created prevailed but with the implementation of each item old sores have reopened and the rival groups are back at the old game.

It is not so much a question of language but of religious affiliations that is being exploited to the detriment of not only national unity but also the country's territorial integrity. The recent happenings involving the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab and their

inevitable repercussions in Haridwar, Rajasthan and possibly the rest of the Hindi belt in North India are not good portents for the future. The situation in the neighbouring state of Jammu and Kashmir is equally alarming; the proximity of the two states to Pakistan and its known involvement in anti-India activities are matters of the gravest concern to our security. The Hindu minorities in these states are systematically discriminated against and made to feel insecure.

The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims in the rest of India are considerably strained. The Shah Banu episode has added fuel to the fire, while the latest judgment in the case of the Babri Mosque in the birthplace of Lord Rama in Ayodhya has poured oil on the raging flames. The bill on the maintenance of Muslim divorcees is a compromise, hastily drawn and badly drafted which hardly provides a solution to the problem; it bristles with legal infirmities and is bound to be rejected by the Supreme Court. So we will be back to square one.

The common manifestation of growing estrangement between the two communities is the recurrence of Hindu-Muslim riots,

which have taken place in several places as a result of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations; it is immaterial who has been the aggressor. The poisoning of the atmosphere is the real menace; it corrodes the vitals of unity.

Somewhat we do not seem to get rid of these problems despite the fact that all well-meaning persons are agreed that these have to be overcome if the Union of India is to be saved. The causes may be different, but the result is the same. They divide different communities and intensify the distrust among them. Take for instance, communal riots; despite all the progress we have made, the cosmopolitan values we have nurtured, the democratic process we have encouraged, the secular ideal we have upheld, the riots don't seem to disappear. They continue to recur and endanger not only our political life but also our social relations; more than any other fact, they prove to be the biggest barrier against improvement in Hindu-Muslim relations. And still neither the government nor the political parties seems worried about them. They are not a law-and-order problem; they are basically an outcome of economic malaise, which take a religious form and are exploited politically.

We are good at analysis but always shy away from results. Many studies of these riots have been done by several responsible agencies; many judicial commissions have submitted their reports. The causes have been analysed; the guilty named; the actions suggested; but these have neither stopped the recurrence of the riots nor have their instigators and perpetrators been brought under control. Why? Because no one has put into practice the remedies.

Every time a riot takes place, the authorities put the blame on some issue or the other and try to escape responsibility. Sometimes it is music before a mosque, sometimes it is the attack on a cow or the throwing of a stone on an idol; sometimes it is a procession here or a brawl there. Our people must really be mad to kill one another for such trifles unless there is a deep-rooted resentment built over a long time,

I—Rajendra Prasad's Absurd Pretensions

By MADHU LIMAYE

In presidential democracies the choice of the head of the state and office of the head of the government are united in one person. In Constitutional states, with parliamentary executives, the two offices are held by two different persons. The head of the state, be he the Crown or the Governor-General or the President, carries out mostly ceremonial functions and the actual governance is left to the council of ministers. It is in this context that Walter Bagehot spoke of the dignified and efficient parts of the Constitution. This description aptly sums up the position of the President and the cabinet under our system also. But even so an area of discretionary or reserve powers remains which assumes importance at critical moments.

Nearly fifty years ago, H.V. Evatt, a judge of the highest judicial tribunal of Australia, in an analytical study, formulated some of the difficulties in respect of constitutional conventions which countries with responsible executives face. Although India is a republic, we share these difficulties with the white dominions in the Commonwealth.

Reserve Powers

Adapting his propositions to parliamentary democracies, the problem of constitutional conventions regarding the use of reserve powers can be reformulated thus:

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2. It is not certain to what extent, and under what conditions, the sovereign or his representative or the President of the republic of India possesses the right to refuse a dissolution of Parliament to his ministers.

3. The power of dismissal of ministers, possessing the confidence of the majority of the popular assembly, is not precisely ascertained.

4. The power of the Crown or its representative or the President to insist upon a dissolution against the will of Parliament and ministers alike, a power connected with 3, is also undefined.

5. The ultimate right of the sovereign or his representative or the President to 'veto', i.e. refuse assent to legislation, again a power connected with 3, is still asserted to exist.

It is in this area that the sovereign or the Governor-General, as also the Indian President, have to determine for themselves, on their own personal responsibility, not only what the true constitutional convention

the area of presidential power. He sought to cast the question in the widest possible terms. However except in the case of the Hindu Code Bill in 1951, Dr Rajendra Prasad's pleas always remained at the academic level. He had no occasion to assert his rights. For Mr Nehru always met him more than half-way, and on the question of the code he finally gave up his attempt to enact the bill before the general election. Mr Rajiv Gandhi has, however, consistently refused to show courtesy to the President. In fact he loftily said—when asked about it—that "I have broken many conventions", as if it was something to be proud of. He was unaware that he was playing with fire.

Although Dr B.R. Ambedkar had stated in the Constituent Assembly that the advice tendered by the cabinet would be *binding* on the President, in the exercise of *all his functions*, and although Rajendra Babu had, apparently, accepted the position in his concluding address to the Constituent Assembly, he was really not convinced about this interpretation of Constitution. He raised the question of President's powers *within two months* after his election and the coming into force of the new Constitution. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister, on March 21, 1950, Dr Rajendra Prasad raised the following questions:

Does the Constitution contemplate any situation in which the President has to act independently of the advice of his ministers?

Independent action by the President may be of three kinds—(a) it may be against the advice given; (b) it may be taken without waiting for or seeking advice; (c) it may have to be taken when the minister refuses to give him advice.

In what circumstances and what kind of independent action may be taken by the President?

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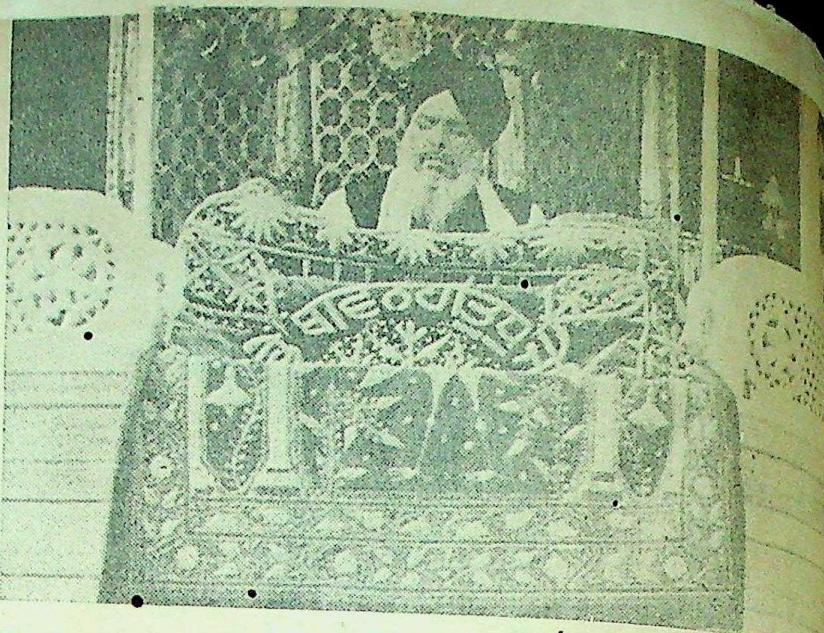
Inevitable Penumbra

Dr Rajendra Prasad attached the greatest significance to the fact that the post of the head of the state in our country is an elected post. He mentioned it in his valedictory speech to the Constituent Assembly, his letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on September 18, 1951, and especially in

lating. The citizens are requested to bear with the taking, which was beyond the control of this Under-

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Truths Communism

which waits for any incident to explode.

Despite our commitment to secularism, we have failed to live up to it; the more we proclaim our faith in it, the more its detractors tear it to shreds. Afraid to counter it, the defenders of secularism sit back and watch helplessly the mischief that the communalists do. The question that arises is: Are we really serious about our secular commitment or is it another hoax that we play on ourselves and on the rest of the world? If not, how is it that this communalisation of our polities goes on unabated? How is it that anti-social elements known to the authorities for their potential for mischief, start about with impunity? How is it that politicians, who thrive on spreading hate, are lionised not only by their followers but also by the so-called guardians of secularism?

irrespective of caste or creed; but has it in reality ensured that equality? The old prejudices continue to permeate every walk of life; there is discrimination in every activity, public or private. That is why the communalists still thrive; where there is discontent, political advantage on religious grounds can be easily obtained. That has been the pattern all along. It gives impetus to the various religious and cultural groups by whipping up emotions and passions. The secularists withdraw into their shells. They may denounce communalism in theory but do little to win over the confidence of the people by concrete measures to uplift them socially and economically. On the contrary when faced with the hard realities of a developing situation, they surrender to the communalists. Mostly it is the vested interests who whip up religious

Gandhiji, a devoutly religious follower that God came to the poor with bread; likewise, secularism. And this is the devil's workshop; the minorities as much economically uplifted as causes of their backwardness well known, will have to be removed on basis and urgent steps to ameliorate conditions will have to be taken.

tunately due to historical reasons the economic condition of each religious group has acquired a certain peculiarity which needs to be comprehended, if its difficulties are to be surmounted.

More than even Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi concentrated on it and during her rule many concrete measures were initiated to tackle the basic problems of livelihood of the religious minorities. She also took many hard political decisions, which helped to give the religious minorities a sense of belonging and even of equality and reduced considerably their frustration.

One of the most imaginative steps she took was the appointment of a high-power panel to go into the economic conditions of the religious minorities; case studies were prepared by it and valuable data collected from every sector; its report, however, submitted more than two years ago, is neither published by the government nor any of its recommendations implemented. The same has been the fate of various directives that Mrs. Gandhi issued in the wake of the series of riots which took place in the early eighties, placing responsibility on various district authorities and spelling out the action to be taken in case of dereliction of duty. To date no officer has been charge-sheeted, much less punished.

Hence while the latest reiteration by the government in the President's address to Parliament "to strengthen secularism" is welcome, it will not produce any better results than in the past unless the authorities are serious in implementing faithfully and

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Every political party, except those who are avowedly communal, pass resolutions against communalisation of our polities, condemn the outbreak of riots, proclaim adherence to communal harmony and still do nothing to strengthen the forces of secularism. The governments, both at the Centre and the states, irrespective of party affiliation, wake up only when disputes erupt, discontent mounts, riots occur and in every situation at best they do the work of fire brigades, putting off the fire and waiting for another alarm call.

During the freedom struggle, the Congress put up a valiant fight against communal forces, today it tends to succumb easily to them. In the process it suffers grievously. The price for getting and retaining power is, indeed, heavy; it compels even the best secularists to give in, sometimes on fundamental issues, due to the fear of losing popular support of one section or the other, which might otherwise be exploited by religious and obscurantist leaders.

What is not realised by the secularists, however, is that the fight for secularism is inextricably linked with the economic uplift of the poor and the downtrodden, who constitute the vast majority of every religious group; unfor-

Despite the creation of Pakistan, our founding fathers, at the behest of Mahatma Gandhi, opted for a secular state, guaranteeing in the Constitution equality of opportunities to all its citizens,

fearlessly in these instructions the directives in the directives are given the political and economic up-
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There is a These instructions religious group diversity, they placate, they tolerate, what we want is that neither nor half-measures ever well clear, the minorities must come to the fore and get their seat, which

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Gandhi man, told him to come to the shop, the shop as much as the rest of the world will have to be primarily have to be nationalised. Unless we sell it, it will never be nationalised.

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I—Rajendra Prasad's Absurd Pretensions

By MADHU LIMAYE

In presidential democracies the office of the head of the state and of the head of the government are united in one person. In constitutional states, with parliamentary executives, the two offices are held by two different persons. The head of the state, be he the Crown or the Governor-General or the President, carries out mostly ceremonial functions and the actual governance is left to the council of ministers. It is in this context that Walter Bagehot spoke of the dignified and efficient parts of the Constitution. This description aptly sums up the position of the President and the cabinet under our system also. But even so an area of discretionary or reserve powers remains which assumes importance at critical moments.

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Inevitable Penumbra

For some time past due to shortage of available power in the system grid of the State, emergency rostering is being carried out in various areas of the state including Allahabad city in addition to scheduled rostering. On 28.4.1987 such emergency rostering was carried out under the instructions of system control, Lucknow from 8.05 hrs. to 14.05 hrs, which was beyond the control of this Under-taking. The citizens are requested to bear with the

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Face To Face With Death

There were several occasions when Gandhi's life had hung by the slenderest thread. In 1943, the doctors had lost all hope of his surviving the 21-day fast, and the government had prepared plans for his funeral; in 1934, a bomb narrowly missed him in the course of his Harijan tour; in 1927 he miraculously escaped an attack of apoplexy; in 1918, an acute attack of dysentery

God's hands and nobody can save me from death if it has to come."

In 1948, the bomb exploded in the house, D. W. Delhi police, Mahatma Gandhi permission to visitors looking came to his

the Mahatma Delhi and de-reason for my reported this minister, Sardar the Sardar met found him ad-a-dit. He repeated told Mehra, God's hands and me from death may seem natural from a man of that "not a His will". But have stemmed sense of a life-

merchant, who was involved in litigation with another merchant. In 1894, while he came down to Durban to catch a steamer for India, news of imminent racial legislation in Natal to disenfranchise Indian immigrants led him to stay on. He founded the Natal Indian Congress and mobilised the Indian community to protest against racial discrimination.

When it seemed that public activities and legal work would keep him tied down to Natal, he paid a visit to India in the summer of 1896 to fetch his family, and incidentally to canvass whatever support he could for the Indian cause in South Africa. He visited Bombay, Calcutta, Poona, Madras and other towns, interviewed eminent leaders such as Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and Tilak, and addressed public meetings to educate Indian opinion on the disabilities of Indians in South Africa.

Unfortunately for Gandhi, distorted versions of his utterances

pened that another ship, s.s. Naderi, left Bombay for Natal about the same time. Gandhi's client, Seth Abdulla, was the owner of one ship and the agent of the other. It was just a coincidence that the two ships had sailed almost at the same time at the end of November 1896 and they reached Durban on December 18. To the Europeans of Natal, already excited by Reuter's report, the coincidence looked like a conspiracy.

On the day Reuter's summary appeared in the newspapers, there was a meeting of Europeans at Maritzburg at which it was decided to form a European Protection Association "to preserve and defend the rights and privileges of European colonists". Ten weeks later, when Gandhi was about to sail from Bombay, the mayor of Durban addressed a meeting in the Town Hall; on December 4, a Colonial Patriotic Union was constituted "to prevent the influx of Asiatics into

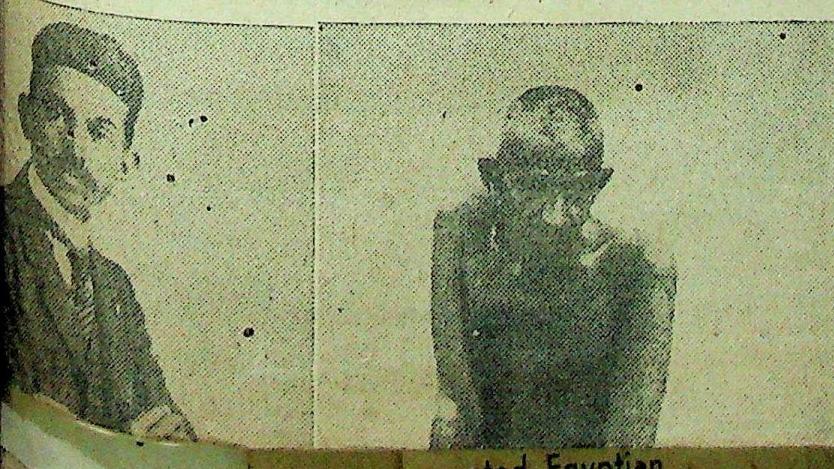
exceeded five days. However, when the duration of quarantine was prolonged to three weeks, its political implications became obvious.

Meanwhile, feeling was running high in the European community in Durban. On January 4, 2,000 Europeans assembled in the Town Hall and called upon the government to prevent "the free Indians" from disembarking and to order their repatriation. There was more than a veiled hint of the use of force against the Indians in the two ships. One of the leaders of the Demonstration Committee, Dr. Mackenzie, who was captain of the Naval Carbineers, declared that Gandhi had "dragged the people of Natal in the gutters" and painted them as black and filthy as his own skin. J. S. Wylie, a solicitor, who was captain of the Durban Light Infantry, delivered an inflammatory speech:

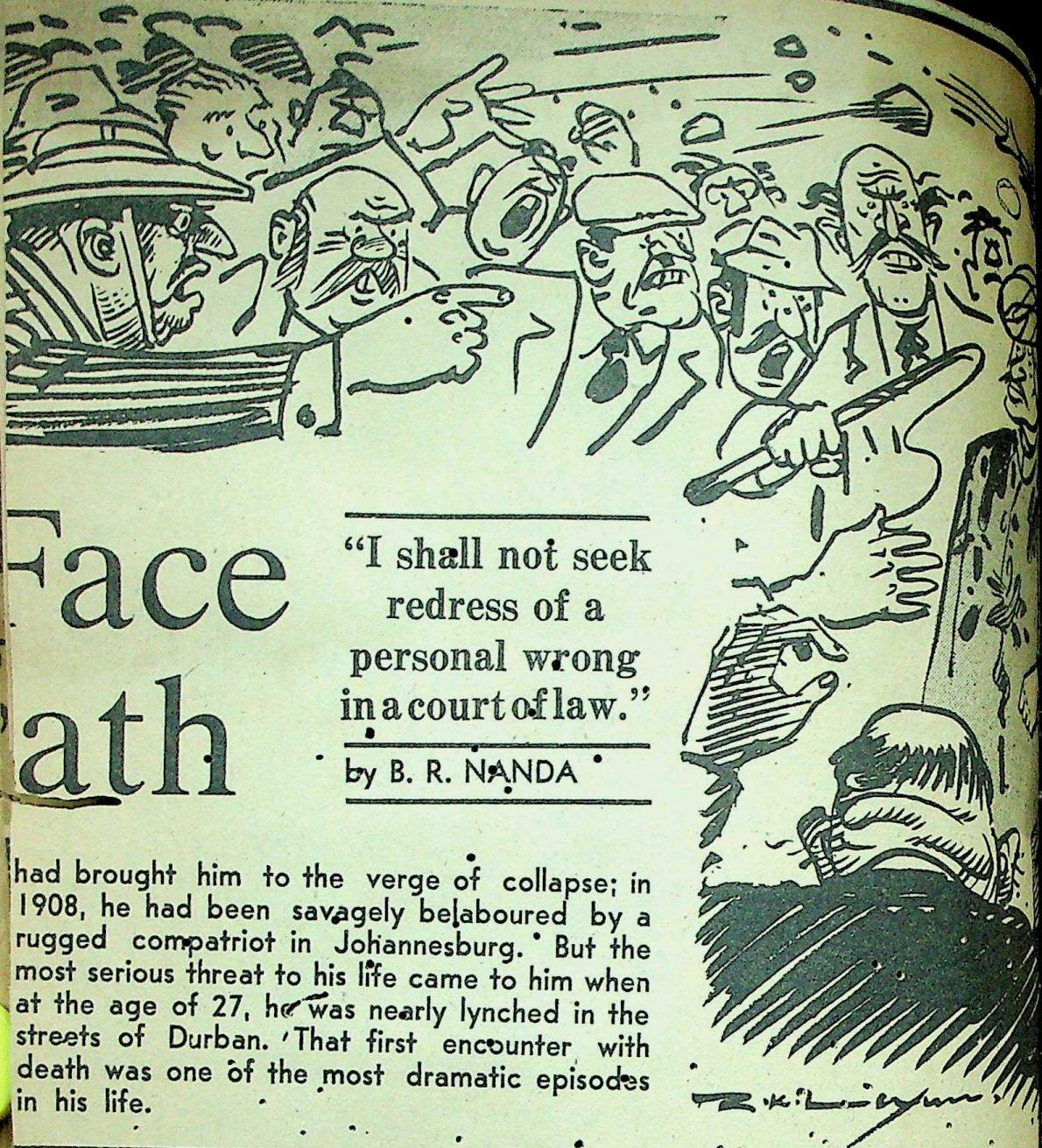
The Indian Ocean was the proper place for these Indians (applause). Let them have it (laughter). They were not going to dispute that right to the water there.

The hall resounded with cries of "Sink the ship!" When Wylie was granted a two-hour interview by Harry Escorne, the attorney-general and defence minister of Natal, he told him: "If you do nothing, we will have to act ourselves; and to go in force to the Point (the harbour) and see what could be done."

THESE were anxious days for Gandhi. The lives of these passengers, most of whom he did not know, and of his own family were in jeopardy on his account. It was he who was the *bete-noire*



noted Egyptian



Face Death

"I shall not seek redress of a personal wrong in a court of law."

by B. R. NANDA

had brought him to the verge of collapse; in 1908, he had been savagely belaboured by a rugged compatriot in Johannesburg. But the most serious threat to his life came to him when at the age of 27, he was nearly lynched in the streets of Durban. That first encounter with death was one of the most dramatic episodes in his life.

noticed innuendoes in the Natal press, suggesting that Gandhi was a coward, that he was hiding himself below deck in the Courland, and was afraid to land.

"If you are not afraid," Laughton said, "I suggest that Mrs. Gandhi and the children should drive to Parsi Rustomji's house, whilst you and I follow them on foot."

"Let us go then," Gandhi replied. With the captain's permission, he went ashore with Laughton. He was recognised by some European boys who began to shout "Gandhi", "Gandhi Booo", "Thrash him", "Surround him". The sky was overcast; Parsi Rustomji's house was two miles away; the crowd was swelling and becoming more and more menacing. Laughton hailed a rickshaw, but the Zulu puller was scared away. Gandhi and Laughton then started walking together, followed by the yelling mob. At the junction of West Street with the principal thoroughfare of Durban, who had landed from the ship at Durban on January 13, 1908, returned to India when s.s. Courland and Naderi left Durban on their return voyage to India.

Ten weeks after the incident, Gandhi wrote to F. S. Talcyarhan, a young barrister, who was planning to come to Natal: "It is a question whether it would be advisable, in the present state of public feeling for you to land in Natal as a public man. Such a man's life in Natal is at present a danger." Gandhi's friend, Barrister Laughton, who had witnessed Gandhi's ordeal on January

Laughton was torn away. A hail-storm of rotten eggs, mud, stale fish and stones was raging round Gandhi.

"Are you the man who wrote to the press?", shouted a European and gave him a brutal kick. Another European hit Gandhi with a riding whip. His turban came off and he was thrown down. A stone struck him on his head. "I was about to fall down unconscious," Gandhi recalled later, "when I held on to the railings of a house nearby, I took breath for a while and when the fainting was over, proceeded on my way. But it was impossible. They came upon me boxing and battering... I had almost given up the hope of reaching home alive. But I remember well that even then my heart did not arraign my assailants." Then (in the words of Joseph Doke, Gandhi's first biographer) "a beautiful and brave thing happened".

Mrs. Alexander, the wife of the superintendent of police at

Durban, happened to be walking from the opposite direction. Both she and her husband knew Gandhi well. She recognised him and began to walk alongside him and opened up her sunshade, even though it was already dark, to keep off the flying missiles. The Europeans had run amuck, but they dared not raise their hand against a white woman. Meanwhile, a few constables arrived and escorted Gandhi to the house of Parsi Rustomji, his host.

Hardly had Gandhi's wounds been dressed, when a European mob collected round the house of his host and shouted: "We want Gandhi". Superintendent Alexander, who had taken his position at the entrance to the house, vainly tried to persuade the crowd to disperse. He sent for the deputy mayor, but the mob did not listen to his appeals either, and threatened to burn the house if Gandhi did not surrender. Alexander sent word to Gandhi to agree to being smuggled out of the house if he did



FATEFUL ENCOUNTER : West Street, the main thoroughfare of Durban, assaulted in January 1897.

Gandhism is not bankrupt

Gandhi's collection shows that Gandhiji's trusteeship was neither a gesture of goodwill to the poor nor the impractical dream of a moral visionary. It was, in fact, a radical and ingenious idea with considerable potential, writes J. D. Sethi.

Capitalist epoch replaced the unique pattern of life between the major and minor crises of the 19th century. The modern state cut loose from traditional logic and became an instrument governed by its own logic.

The consequences of the state as the collective community could be a neutral spectre.

The question of the state and the economy to be placed at the top of the political agenda and there ever since.

Theologies as communism, socialism and all of them in 1830, re

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animal. Com-

munism increased the power of the state, reduced man to a mere cog in the machine, involved violence and rested on the dangerous belief that killing men who stood in the way of progress was fully justified.

Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship was intended to avoid the evils and combine the benefits of capitalism and communism, to socialise property without nationalising it, to fill the form of private ownership with socialist content. As he imagined it, every man who owned anything that others needed for their livelihood was to look upon it not as his property but as a trust which he held on behalf of the community and for which he was socially accountable.

Take a man owning an industry. As a trustee he was expected to do the following: First, he would himself work like any other employee. Second, he would take no more than what he needed for a moderately comfortable life. Third, he would look upon his employees as members of his family and jointly responsible with him for the management of the industry. Fourth, he would provide healthy working conditions and welfare schemes for the workers and their families. Fifth, they would both regard themselves as trustees of the consumers and take care not to produce shoddy goods or charge exorbitant prices. Sixth, they would aim to make a moderate profit, part of which would be devoted to the welfare of the community and the rest to the improvement of the industry. Seventh, the owner could pass on the industry to his children or whoever be liked only if they agreed to run it in the spirit of trusteeship.

Although the answers are not entirely convincing, they show that Gandhism is not as bankrupt as it is made out to be.

Gandhiji was repeatedly asked what he would do if the rich refused to become trustees of their property. He admitted that none of those close to him had, the only exception being Jamnalal Bajaj who "came near, but only near it." He hoped that if the workers and peasants could be helped to develop the "consciousness of the grave injustice done to them," they would create a strong public opinion in favour of trusteeship, and even stage satyagrahas when necessary. If that did not work, he favoured state action. The state was to make trusteeship compulsory.

The owners of the property were to receive a commission



Portrait of Gandhiji by Ms. E. Brunner.

Trusteeship : The Gandhian Alternative : Edited By J. D. Sethi (Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1986)

"commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society," and the rest of the profit was to be used to develop the industry and contribute to national well-being. The trustee was to choose his heir but the "choice must be finalised by the state".

Gandhiji thought such a co-operative decision checked boli. The trustee retained "legal ownership" and the property formally remained his. His decisions and income were, however, subject to state control. Gandhiji summed up his position in 1939 in the following words, "I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite as much as the most advanced socialist and even communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ".

Asked if he would allow the state to use violence if a man did not become a trustee, Gandhiji replied, "Yes, the state will, as a matter of fact, take away these things, and I think it will be justified if it uses a minimum of violence". In a different context the Mahatma was asked if the state should dispossess interests in conflict with the national good. He replied in the affirmative and said it would have to be done "without compensation, because if you want the government to pay compensation it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul and that would be impossible."

Thanks to the fear of violence by the poor, a genuine concern for their well-being and the stability of the new state, Gandhiji increasingly moved towards a social-democratic state. In many

ways he was more of a social and economic radical than Nehru and certainly more than Vinoba Bhave whose consciousness never rose beyond the patronising idea of "dan" and who never knew how to build up a popular movement.

Prof. J. D. Sethi has put together a useful collection. It sets the record straight and shows that Gandhiji's trusteeship was neither a sentimental gesture of goodwill to the poor nor an impractical dream of a moral visionary, but a radical and ingenious idea with considerable potential.

It raises obvious questions, such as how the state is to appoint a trustee, what kind of industries can be brought within its purview, if it rules out competition, how the prices are to be determined, how to regulate imports and whether the theory does not give the state far more power than Gandhiji would have thought appropriate.

The book deals with these and other related questions and shows that it is not impossible to answer them within the Gandhian framework. Although the answers are not entirely persuasive, they do show that Gandhism is not as bankrupt as Gandhians imply, and that there is a distinct Gandhian voice in the current depressing debate on how to cope with the ministerial social and economic problems that could tear apart our social fabric and undermine national integrity before we get anywhere near the 21st century.

The Formidable Memsahib

GANDHIJI'S DISCIPLINE

Flora Annie Steele, who arrived in India in 1867 as the wife of an ICS officer, wrote many sociologically significant novels on Anglo-India. But it is as the author of "The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook," which distils the quintessence of the memsahib's world that she is affectionately remembered.

by N. J. NANPORIA

THERE have been many formidable memsahibs in colonial India but none surely will match the presence and dimensions of Flora Annie Steel who arrived in 1867 as the wife of an ICS officer posted to the Punjab. She was the personification of the kind of severe energy and ruthless curiosity that were not uncommon in Victorian India but which she developed to an extravagant degree. Her many novels on Anglo-India have been the subject of learned sociological studies but it is as the author of *The Complete Indian Housekeeper & Cook* published in 1888 that she is affectionately remembered by all those captivated by Anglo-Indian lore.

It distils the quintessence of the memsahib's world and is dedicated

to "The English Girls to whom Fate may assign the task of being house mothers in our Eastern Empire". Flora was a woman of many parts and strongly disapproved of those memsahibs who depended on their servants or let things slide or took no interest in the country in which Fate and Duty had placed them. She herself learned the language of the villagers, translated Punjabi folk songs, encouraged local handicrafts,

promoted education for women, and wrote her husband's dispatches when he was ill.

Her determination to conquer and control her environment—the eternal preoccupation of the British in India—was well above average; and nowhere was this more evident than in her application of it in the organisation and management of her household. Hers was a time when the Anglo-Indian home had already acquired a near traditional pattern of its own with complexities of which the newly arrived memsahib had no knowledge. Flora, the overwhelming do-gooder, briskly put this right in a compendium of authoritative advice to which there must be no parallel in the history of the Empire anywhere in the world.

Flora touches briefly and discreetly.

Flora's philosophy which she doubtless expounded to her husband was that "rulers can only control and guide their wards if they understand them, but the depth and extent of this knowledge must be defined and confined." Too deep an understanding would reveal Indian proclivities that would unsettle the European and render him less able to serve the Empire. Much the same principle was applied by Flora to the running of the ideal Anglo-Indian household. Servants, she advises, should be taken on at the lowest rate with the understanding that zeal and efficiency would be rewarded with baksheesh "that makes the wage upto that usually demanded by good servants". This method, it is pointed out, is preferable to "volcanic eruptions of fault finding."

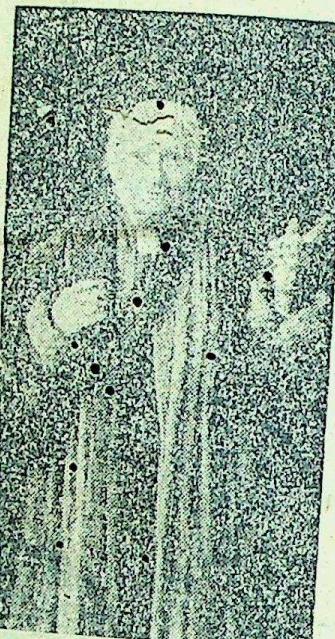
Rather more weird was Flora's technique of keeping recalcitrant servants in line by administering castor oil "as an ultimatum in all obstinate cases." Whether this was established practice in the late nineteenth century is not clear but servants of the time are said to have ridiculed each other with the words, "The memsahib will have to give you castor oil." An idea of the superabundance of victuals and the toughness of Victorian stomachs can be gathered from Flora's complaint that the ordinary India cook has not an idea for breakfast beyond chops, steaks, fried fish and quail. Considering the lack of modern conveniences and the location of the kitchen more than fifty yards from the main living quarters it is

astonishing that Indian cooks were able to serve up meals that satisfied the high expectations of the Anglo-Indians. Flora, however, frowns on "heavy luncheons or dittins" which have "much to answer for in India". Over-eating, "because they have nothing else to do", brings about a "semi-torporid state" which tends to kill the "sociable conversation" between on-lunch and afternoon tea.

A Gem Of Its Kind

The flavour of it all is wafted to us by the comment that "In India it is customary to speed the parting guests with cigars". Altogether, Flora's guide to young Englishwomen is a gem of its kind, bringing to life the days when in Bombay a house on Malabar hill was available at a monthly rent of Rs. 200. As for Flora as a person she was, as so many of her contemporaries were, something of an enigma. She could write "I do not wish to advocate an ungracious haughtiness but an Indian household can no more be governed peacefully without dignity and prestige than an Indian Empire." These were indeed very Victorian sentiments and Flora was of her time. Yet she it was who wrote of Indian erotic art "To our modern modesty some of these imaginings appear obscene but in that this when they were lovingly reverently given shape from the rude stone they were everyday symbols of great thought."

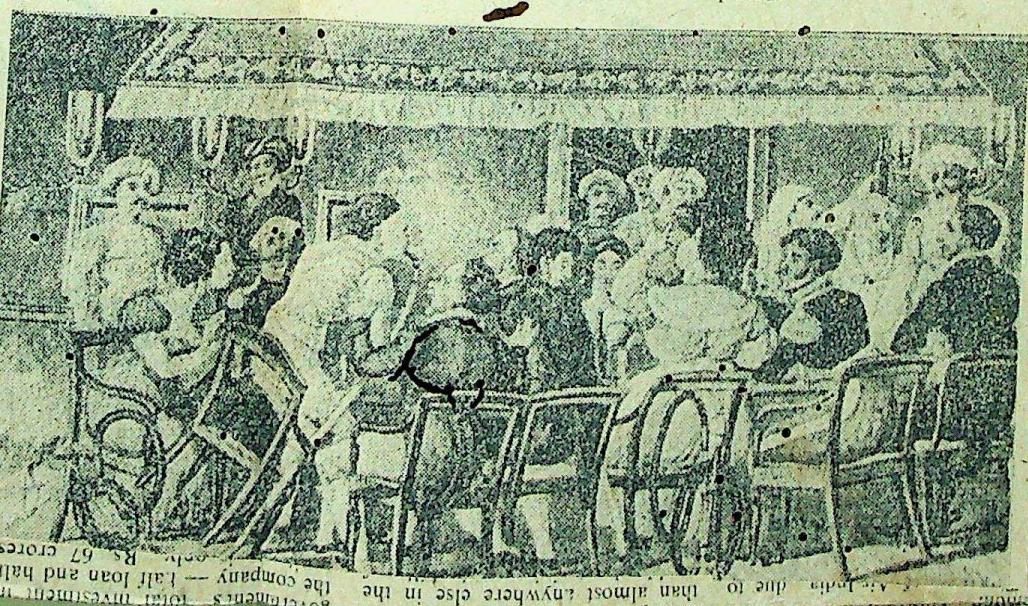
And a Cambridge educated Indian in one of her novels says of the British "What right have they to alter our standards, to educate us to be like them and then to let us stew in our own juice." Chuckling over Flora's home management book—a guide really to establishing an English home to keep the Indian environment at a distance—and reading her dated novels one remains in awe of a character at once so much commended, so much detail, and lived a life with the rest which is so much of her period.



Flora Steele: A woman of many parts.

The memsahib weighing out the day's supplies. One is enabled by the disclosures of how the Indian household in the heyday of Empire suffered from disabilities not altogether unfamiliar today. The khitmuggar for example would be discovered using his toes as toasting rack or a greasy turban as a soup strainer, and there were often scandals between ayahs and other servants, a matter on which

The Sahib at table. Flora frowns on "heavy luncheons or tiffins" which have "much to answer for in India."



The Sahib at table. Flora frowns on "heavy luncheons or tiffins" which have "much to answer for in India."

The Future of India In Stories

Flora Annie Steele, who arrived in India 1867 as the wife of an ICS officer, wrote many sociologically significant novels on Anglo-India. But it was as the author of 'The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook,' which distilled the quintessence of memsahib's world, she is affectionately remembered.

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the IATA tariffs, though heavily tilted against the Third World airlines, afforded a measure of protection to the scrupulous: now one adheres to them any more. Even so the hundred odd member airlines of the IATA lost in 1979 nearly a billion dollars between them on a total turnover of \$70 billion. The scope for expansion is

generating its own traffic. The basic thing is that it must expand and grow to stay afloat.

Whatever the odds, Air-India has a good deal of intrinsic strength to emerge a winner. Like any other international carrier, it basically, provides a service and, as such, it has no business to lose

like Quantas around this favourable venue, finding for itself of a long term. Indeed, the airline is

IN one of the first issues of "Panjab" broken for Gandhiji, new turn organization machine" implied that appeared on 1947, the C. D. party democratic India was owing to a political language India was nor did it Government, even Indian was man or woman in the struggle circumstances was more political party ruling party question out of office in Parliament maintain its discipline whenever p.

Gandhiji's acceptance by the nation. How of discipline only say that the Congress to accept him the movement fight for freedom programme converted to mode of life in achieving Congress his services of a "syndicate" appointed by him, it could be tured the Congress that he was discipline in in democracy government of truth.

DIS Gandhiji was of discipline, was strictly in 1934 he felt was not accepted, in terms plans, he left. Even then he outside, where was needed. Founder of the Congress, as well as father of the Minister. But as "Gandhiji" break away a piece which little was before the nation 14 big banks, include 17 years of Mrs Gandhi loved and four more rule.

Gandhiji initially, in the able to make and throw a mightiest empire on which set". Mrs Gandhiing a mere shadow, which to rise to her

The Prime at Kanpur had recently been taken to the similar to the Gandhiji in

GANDHIJI'S DISCIPLINE UNITED THE NATION & THE CONGRESS

Funding: Tattva Heritage and IKS MoE Digitization: eGangotri
By J. B. Kripalani

IN one of her public meetings in Kanpur, Mrs Indira Gandhi is reported to have said that "Party discipline was broken for the first time" by Gandhiji, when he gave it a new turn and transformed the organization into a fighting machine". This would seem to imply that before Gandhiji appeared on the scene or even in 1947, the Congress was a political party in a free and democratic India. It would be obvious to a person conversant with the language of politics that India was then neither free nor did it have a democratic Government. Before independence, every freedom-loving Indian was either a Congress man or one who helped it in the struggle for freedom. In the circumstances, the Congress was more a platform than a political party. It was not the ruling party and there was no question of its being thrown out of office by an adverse vote in Parliament if it failed to maintain its majority through discipline, by issuing whip, whenever necessary.

Gandhiji's leadership was accepted by the Congress and the nation. How does the question of discipline arise? One can only say that Gandhiji induced the Congress and the country to accept his novel ideas about the means to be used in the fight for freedom, as well as his programme and leadership. He converted the Congress to his mode of thought and action. If in achieving his leadership in the Congress he had simplified the services of a political clique, a "syndicate", or publicity agents, appointed by him or self-appointed, it could be said that he "captured" the Congress. But to say that he was the first to break discipline in an organized party in a democracy which ran the government would be a travesty of truth.

DISCIPLINE

Gandhiji was the embodiment of discipline. His whole life was strictly regulated. When in 1934 he felt that his leadership was not acceptable to the Congress, in terms of his ideas and plans, he left the organization. Even then he helped it from outside, whenever his guidance was needed. He was always jealous of the reputation of the Congress, as was the distinguished father of the present Prime Minister. But such utterances as "Gandhiji was the first to break Congress discipline" are a piece with the statements that little was done for the poor before the nationalization of the 14 big banks. This period would include 17 years of the stewardship of Mrs Gandhi's universally loved and respected father rule.

Gandhiji infused new life and vitality in the Congress and enabled it to mobilize the people and throw a challenge to the mightiest empire in history, an empire on which "the sun never sets". Mrs Gandhi has been fighting a mere shadow of a "Syndicate", which helped her twice to rise to her present eminence.

The Prime Minister also said at Kanpur that by what she had recently done "the Congress has taken a similar turn (similar to the turn given by Gandhiji in 1919). It is for

Congressmen to make the best use of it". What Gandhiji did in 1919 was to give a revolutionary "turn" to the political thought of the Congress and the country. Before Gandhiji's advent, the methods used by the Congress to achieve swaraj consisted of "prayer, petition and protest". He substituted for these "direct action", though non-violent. This was a revolutionary change in the functioning of the Congress and the nation. To accomplish this revolution, both the Congress and the nation were united and consolidated. It was not only the Congress but the whole nation that became a "fighting machine".

CONGRESS GOALS

This apart, Congressmen have taken full advantage of the nationalization of some banks. Mr Kamaraj and Mr Bhawan, who had voted for Mr Reddy as Presidential candidate, reluctantly welcomed it, forgetting the means used to bring it about! All Congress MPs voted for it. Even those who were supposed to be opposed to it, including Mr Morarji Desai and Mr Patil, supported it. But for the majority that the Congress enjoys in both Houses of Parliament, the measure would not have been passed. The support of the Communists and some other Opposition parties only added to the majority vote that the Congress commands.

It was but natural that Congressmen should support this partial measure of nationalization. Nearly two decades back the Congress adopted "socialism" as its goal. It is pledged to nationalize, by stages, some sectors of our economy. Steps have been taken from time to time in this direction. The Imperial Bank was first nationalized and then life insurance; all banks were recently placed under "social control". What the Prime Minister has done is to expedite the process of nationalization in a small, though important, sector of finance. This partial measure did not satisfy some Congressmen, who moved amendments to the effect that all banks, big and small, Indian and foreign, be nationalized. The amendments were rejected by the Prime Minister.

On her own admission, bank nationalization will not be complete, until some "follow-up" steps are undertaken. Such steps may fulfil the objective or defeat it from its avowed purpose. How the nationalization of banks will work and whether it will yield desired results is an open question. To sing its praise day after day is scarcely justified, though it may be good propaganda for the Prime Minister.

Self-adulation or praise by appointed or self-appointed publicity agents may be the way of ambitious politicians, but it was never the way of the Father of the Nation, who made truth and non-violence the rock of his life. It would be more appropriate for the Prime Minister to compare her recent accomplishment with that of some politician other than Gandhiji. She will find many such in world history.

But perhaps the Prime Minister was thinking not of this "step" but some other "step" of which the Communists took advantage but not the bulk of Congressmen. That was the

vote for the Presidential election. Only a minority followed her lead. Those who voted for the party candidate are beginning to reap the consequences of their betrayal of the Prime Minister. Mr N. P. C. Naidu, M.P., was informed by the Speaker that his name was included in the Parliamentary Delegation going to Trinidad. He was afterwards informed by the Speaker that his name had been taken out by the Prime Minister from the list of the members of the delegation submitted to her and another name had been substituted. Whether the selection of members of a Parliamentary Delegation falls under her jurisdiction or that of the Speaker is a matter which the latter has to decide. If only all Congressmen had followed her lead in the Presidential election all would have been well with the Party. It would have remained united. As it is, in spite of the two unity resolutions passed by the Working Committee, the Congress Party is divided as never before. There are statements and counter-statements, to the delight of Press reporters, who not only broadcast these statements but also take added pleasure in having Press conferences with various senior leaders in the Congress wherein their contradictions are often exposed. It is true that the Prime Minister has gained by the publicity drive in her favour. But he will be a bold man who can say that the Congress has emerged stronger, the nationalization of some banks notwithstanding.

THE COMMUNISTS

The Prime Minister has also said that the Communists took advantage of this "step". If Congressmen did not, it is their fault. I have shown that Congressmen took full advantage of the nationalization, as did the Communists. But the latter went further and won her favour by voting against Mr Reddy in the Presidential election. In this, of course, as disciplined Congressmen, a section did not join the Prime Minister, as did the Communists. The latter must have, therefore, earned her favour.

Mr Jawaharlal Nehru, while he praised the Communist Parties of Russia and China for what they had been able to do for their people always said that the Indian Communist Party was reactionary. It did not keep in view the prevailing circumstances in its own country, where a democratic Government, with socialistic pattern of society as its goal, had been functioning. Since then very vital changes have taken place in the shape and form of the various Communist Parties that have been formed to rehabilitate them into radical parties. They are now managing or rather mismanaging two State Governments. The result has not been progress but confusion. Each section of the Communists in the Cabinets of West Bengal and Kerala is at loggerheads with the other. In Kerala the two wings of the Communists accuse each other of corruption. (As neutrals we believe both sides). In West Bengal their followers murder each other and the Government looks on. This must surely be radicalism. Is it not the mark of vigorous political life?

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JALLIANWALA BAGH

(50th Anniversary)

Jallianwala Bagh's Days Of Terror: Eye-Witness Account

ON the fateful Baisakhi Day, 50 years ago, I stood in Chowk Phawara, barely 50 yards from Jallianwala Bagh, when General Dyer with his armed troops rushed past us. Within minutes, we heard the sound of firing.

Along with others, I dashed into the nearby market and hid myself. The firing continued intermittently for quite a while. Then, we saw the General and his troops going back after they had written one of the bloodiest chapters in India's history.

The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was not an isolated affair. It was the culmination of events which started a week earlier on April 6, 1919. The scenes of communal harmony witnessed in those days completely frightened an administration which lived on divide and rule.

The promulgation of the Rowlett Act had sent a wave of anger through the body politic of India.

• By SETH RADHA KISHEN •

Punjab, too, was in the thick of it. The traders of Amritsar had observed a hartal on March 30 to protest against the Act and the second hartal was scheduled for April 6. Despite official pressure and threats, complete hartal was observed in Amritsar on that day. Such a thing had never happened before and in my curiosity, I asked my father the reason for it. His reply still echoes in my ears. "It only happens in two counts", my father said, "either when a ruler is dead or when people rise in revolt".

It was, in fact, a revolt by the people against a repressive law which denied them the right of Vakil, Dalil and Appeal. Mahatma Gandhi was coming to Amritsar but was arrested at Palwal, on the border of Punjab.

Scenes of communal harmony annoyed the British rulers. They had grown panicky. Next day, Dr Kitchlu and Dr Sat Pal were arrested. This angered the people. A huge procession, led by Manisha Rattan Chand and Chaudhry Bugga Mal, marched towards the

Deputy Commissioner's residence Jallianwala Bagh and were dead. A reign of terror followed. Traders were ordered to deposit their keys at the city Kotwall. My father went every morning to the Kotwall and, like other traders, placed the keys on the steps of the Kotwall and stayed beside them till sunset. The routine was resumed the next day. All private means of conveyance, including cars and tongas, were taken over by the Martial Law Administrator. Instead of compensating them, the administrator required the owners to pay for their maintenance and the salaries of the staff.

In those days, Amritsar was a dear city. Not a soul stirred outside doors. Even the birds left the city. Mounted police patrolled the city and every Indian, young or old, was required to stand up and salute these troops whenever they passed.

One day, I stood near the Queen's statue when General Dyer himself happened to pass that way. Panic gripped me and, my hand raised in salute, I stood there for almost half an hour till the last of Dyer's men had disappeared from sight. The incident had a tremendous effect on me which changed my entire outlook. From the innocent son of a peace-loving merchant, I became a rebel against the alien Government. At that very moment, I decided to fight the regime which had reduced us to a state of slavery.

Despite this reign of terror and official precautions, the news of the massacre leaked out and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya reached Amritsar. He stayed in a small temple opposite the railway footbridge. The scared people of Amritsar would have nothing to do with him. In the whole city, Pandit Malaviya could not find an individual who would even loan him a tumbler to drink water. But, Pandit Malaviya did not lose heart and went round infusing courage in the people.

To give confidence to Punjab and challenge the might of the oppressors, the next session of the Congress was held in Gole Bagh at Amritsar in December, 1919. And for the first time in India's freedom struggle, the Congress decided on non-cooperation. Jallianwala Bagh showed the way.

the Jallianwala Bagh memorial. The pillar of human tragedy.



the canny SCOTCHMAN

A POSTHUMOUS baby Adam Smith was a delicate child whose schooling was delayed because of his weak constitution. Yet he developed into a larger-than-life personality who is remembered to this day as one of the greatest economists of all times.

He was born in 1723—either at the end of May or early June: the exact date is not recorded—at Kirkcaldy (pronounced Kirkawdy), a small town on the east coast of Scotland. Incidentally, he preferred to call himself a Scotchman, rather than Scotsman.

"Scotchmen" are known, among other things, for their canniness, and Adam Smith was no exception. He was always asking questions, out-of-the-way facts always attracted him; obviously he had alert ears and inquisitive eyes and, what is most important, a memory which could store knowledge for use whenever it was needed.

This last quality was his best asset for his life's greatest work: the writing of the voluminous *Wealth of Nations*.

Adam Smith learnt his letters at his widowed mother's knees and then went to a two-roomed school to begin regular studies. But as he grew up he developed the habit of sitting at the quay, watching the ships come and go, admiring the sailors and fishermen for their adventures, and quietly listening to harrowing tales of smugglers and their nefarious activities.

Young Adam was already learning first hand about overseas trade, international relations, and much else involved in the "Science of Economics" which he was going to create.

At 14, he went to Glasgow to continue studies at the college or university (which was, in fact, more like a high school).

Moral philosophy was the subject he liked best out of a rather elaborate curriculum. We wonder whether this subject influenced him to the extent that, unlike most of his fellow students, Adam Smith was not affected by the charms of the bewitching Mally Campbell, the Principal's daughter!

In 1740 he went to Oxford as a "Snell Exhibitioner" and

stayed at Balliol for six years, enriching his experience, excelling in academic attainments and indulging in Bodleian's rich collection.

On his return to Scotland, Adam Smith gave a series of lectures in Edinburgh, and then became Professor of Logic at Glasgow University. Within a year he moved to the Department of Moral Philosophy, his favourite subject.

Out of his lectures was born a large book entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (published in 1759). He always looked upon his 13 years as Professor in Glasgow as the happiest in his life. "No man," he wrote in later days, "can owe greater obligations to a society than I do to the University of Glasgow."

Apart from the intellectual inspiration, Glasgow gave him an insight into the business world as this city played a major rôle in commerce and industry. Among Adam Smith's new-found friends was Andrew Cochrane, a wealthy merchant

The intellectual giant in Adam Smith, whose scientific approach to economics is respected even today, had risen from uninspiring circumstances.
ALFRED J. EDWIN narrates the absorbing human story of a delicate child growing into an all-time great.

who had founded the first of many Political Economy Clubs. With the advantage of hindsight, we can see how the man who had established a reputation as a philosopher was returning his mind to economics in the widest sense of the word.

Yes, Adam Smith was a philosopher, and, though at an absent-minded moment he tried to make tea with bread and butter, he was a philosopher with his feet firmly on the ground. In fact he was very clearheaded and could express himself very clearly. If parts of *The Wealth of Nations* make heavy reading, it is not because of the language but the substance of the matter.

While he was at Glasgow, the University honoured him with an LL.D., and in turn Dr. Adam Smith expressed his

gratitude by serving the institution with love and devotion. (Three years before his death in 1790, he was invited to become the University's Rector, an honour which gave him "much real satisfaction".)

Yet the major events of the 1760s included his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society, and an assignment which enlarged his international perspective.

In 1763 he was asked to chaperon Francis, the young Duke of Buccleugh, on a grand tour of the Continent. It was on this three-year trip—while wanting "to pass away the time" in Toulouse (France)—that he wanted to write a book: there is reason to believe that this was the beginning of *The Wealth of Nations*.

But the real work on it began in 1767 when Adam Smith, on return from Europe, had collected more material at the British Museum in London and then settled down in Kirkcaldy with his ageing mother and a cousin, Jean Douglas, who did the housekeeping. As one of his biographers, E. Royston Pike, has said, "he had his adored mother and Jean to keep him company, and he seemed to want no other female companionship".

He could never get the book out of his mind, adds Pike. It was published in 1776—a labour of 10 years including four in London for a thorough revision.

It was an age of intellectuals and Adam Smith was among them. At the Literary Club in London his company included Johnson and Boswell, Gibbon the historian and Goldsmith the poet, Reynolds the painter and Garrick the great actor.

Towards the end of his life Adam Smith lived in Edinburgh, when he was one of the Commissioners of Custom in Scotland. He planned several other books but never finished any of these. The death of his mother in 1784 was a great blow.

Jean passed on four years later. In the midst of the increasing gloom, Adam Smith persisted with the revision of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* for a new edition and saw it through the press before his death in 1790.

The greatest memorial to his life's work is *The Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith will always be remembered for some of his quotable expressions, and the book itself is fascinating for the wealth of unusual information it contains: for instance, Royston Pike repeats with a sense of suppressed delight that it was this book which informed him that Queen Elizabeth I was the first person in England to wear stockings!

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A tale of two separatists

MR. M. KARUNANIDHI
is reported to have stated during the recent by elections that Tamil Nadu would be converted into another Punjab. Mr M. G. Ramachandran reacted by saying that "those who speak thus" should ponder over the fate of Bhindranwale.

We have not read Mr Karunanidhi's statement, but the thought of Tamil Nadu being converted into another Punjab is terrifying. Can we dismiss the DMK's reported threat as no more than the irresponsible outburst of a politician condemned to wilderness?

Punjab and Tamil Nadu are quite different, but it might be worthwhile to find out if we can draw a parallel between the separatist movements among the Sikhs and the Tamils. Of the Tamil separatism has a long history. It goes back to the period with the founding of the Justice Party. This party initially represented a struggle against the government and in this process that it adopted a bitter anti-Brahmin stand. With the rise of Periyar E. V. Ramasami Naicker, who resigned from the Congress to start a Respect movement, there was an upsurge among the Tamils, particularly among the Dalits. It led to the so-called Dravidian movement with anti-Brahmin and anti-North. Under Periyar, the Tamils saw themselves as a separate people who had been excluded by the Aryan North. They were also regarded as Hindus. Hinduism itself was at that time seen as a religion imposed on Tamils by the Aryans.

It is now widely accepted that there is as much Aryan as Dravidian. Some would even go to the extent of claiming that Dravidian elements predominate in the whole Aryan-Aryan controversy as means. However it be, the point is that during all our conflicts over the centuries of darkness and enlightenment, there has been an unending movement towards fusion and synthesis. Hinduism absorbed elements, apart from Buddhism and Jainism. But it became resilient by the time made its impact on the world. But the eclectic movement did not altogether become Sikhism is an attempt indeed for reconciliation for it was an attempt to bring together Hindu and

areas of Punjab is that

movement, or this

process of religious and

understanding and syn-

thesis. The Sikhs yearning for

The Sikhs yearning for an "identity" of their own—dus—is similar to the non-Brahmin Tamils wanting a separate group. The Tamil separatists, however, did turn because its leaders proclaimed themselves atheists.

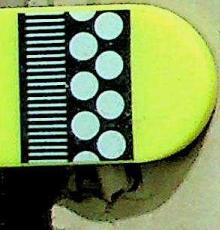


SAFETY FIRST: C. N. Annadurai.

areas from India was first proposed at this time by Periyar, following the introduction of Hindi as a compulsory language by Rajaji. (Ironically, Rajaji later emerged as a bitter opponent of compulsory Hindi in schools). The idea of Dravidanadu, including the areas where Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu are spoken, was also Periyar's. He suggested it at a conference in Tiruvarur in 1940. During the war, the Justice Party (the parent body of the Dravida Kazhagam) demanded a separate

his becoming the chief minister. Anna said that his party was "not at all itching for a clash between the Centre and the state". He also added that the DMK "would not revive the demand for a separate Dravidanadu". Today hardly any responsible politician belonging to any of the Dravidian parties talks of Dravidistan. Indeed under Mr M. G. Ramachandran Tamil Nadu, it could be claimed, has been brought closer to the national mainstream if there is any such.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



He remains one of the most controversial of the British Viceroys. Most Indians regard him as the type of Western imperialism — self-assured, arrogant, totally committed to the theory of the white man's vision to civilize the Asian. Even today he is remembered, above all, for his partition of Bengal which had subsequently to be annulled. But India has much to be grateful to him. But for him, our frontiers along Tibet may have remained undefined. But for him our monuments might have disappeared, many without a trace. The beautiful carved friezes from Amravati being used to lay down railway lines when he saw the horror of it and promulgated the act for protection of monuments.

wholeheartedly as Mayo had done; highest standards which gave b

cash man." Elgin's
brother, in speaking
of Nathaniel Cur-
rier, one of his chief
of those flaws in
which, for all his
qualities — his ency-
clopedia knowledge, his limitless
work, his sense of
order and efficiency, his
sense of elucidation —
the greatest of all
but only the best.
"Too much hub-
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to all his friend and
enemy, Walter Law.
What was wrong with his
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As well as be-
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was a great鼓励 and also
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which makes the Her-
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remarkable. The fact
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ency as did his well-
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side up his mind
would be the ruler of
Curzon set out to
for the post in a
far future viceroy
order to acquire a
pledge of Asian
and he had a pas-
sion quite apart from
the travelled ex-
periences of his journeys
in the extreme
travels to India and
the inaccessible out-
West Frontier,
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Russia in Persia enabled
a little more than
what would long
work on that coun-
try volumes.
in India Curzon
brought into his work as

wholeheartedly as Mayo had done thirty years earlier. He set about overhauling the entire machinery of government; and within three months of taking office had drawn up a programme of reforms ranging in scope from agriculture to education, from currency to municipalities, from the army to the archaeological department, from the North-West Frontier to the Calcutta imperial library. As in Mayo's time, the strong personality of the viceroy soon came to be felt in every branch of the administration; minutes on every subject stowed from his pen, clearly and accurately summarising masses of detail. While the task he set himself and his way of tackling it inevitably confined him to the great room in the south-western wing of Government House for even longer hours than his predecessors had spent there, he had no intention of being a remote bureaucrat; but followed Mayo's example and went about the country as much as he could to talk to the men on the spot.

T Curzon, it was unthinkable that the Government of India should be directed in detail by Whitehall; he could never quite accept the fact that, as viceroy, he was the servant and instrument of the British government. It is an exaggeration to say, as has been frequently said, that he regarded himself as an independent potentate; but he certainly did not see the viceroy as the Great Ornamental; believing that "he and he alone" was "the government in its personal aspect". In his attitude of L'état c'est moi, Curzon was trying to put the clock back before the advent of the telegraph; or at any rate to before the days of Lansdowne and Elgin.

BUT while Curzon was all too apt at times to think of himself as ill-used, he enjoyed being viceroy none the less; especially when Mary was with him, for he missed her acutely when he and she were apart. Fascinated as he was by the East, believing as passionately as he did in Britain's Imperial destiny — "to me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom, that our work is righteous and that it shall endure" he once declared in a speech — his high position afforded him the utmost fulfilment. He was a romantic; he was second to none in being aware of the poetry and glory of ruling India; he also took a keen interest in the traditions, customs and ceremonials of the viceroyalty, of which he made a close study. It was his sense of tradition and his desire, as a perfectionist, to bring the running of w^ss in advance of his time in all

highest standards which gave him his reputation for being over-fond of pomp and ceremony; a reputation to which his majestic dictation and his preternaturally stiff and erect bearing — due largely to the steel corset he was obliged to wear on account of his defective spine — likewise contributed. In fact, Curzon disliked most ceremonial occasions, regarding them as a waste of valuable time which might otherwise have been devoted to work; they also caused him much discomfort, if not pain, on account of his back.

THE entertaining at Government House when Curzon was viceroy was on an unprecedented scale. During each of his winter seasons there were two levees, a drawing room, a state ball, a state evening party, a garden party, several lesser balls and a number of official dinners; together with an informal dance and two or three smaller dinners every week. Calcutta society was still growing. There were now 1,600 guests at the state ball, 600 at each of the lesser balls, £20 at the large dinners and 1,500 at the state evening party which was given mainly for Indians who did not dance. Perhaps the most spectacular Government House function of the reign was the fancy dress ball of January 1903, at which the costumes were meant to recreate Wellesley's famous ball of exactly a hundred years before. On this and similar occasions Curzon found time, amidst all his other labours, to supervise the details himself.

A s a seasoned traveller, he was ready to put up with discomforts; he saw the funny side of those mishaps and absurdities from which viceregal progresses were seldom entirely immune; whether it was finding himself sitting on the head of a Maharaja in a ditch when the landau carrying the two of them overturned, or making a state entry into a city beneath a triumphal arch bearing the inscription "God Bless Our horrible lout" which was meant to be "honourable lord". It did him good to get away from his desk and into the open air; tours afforded him opportunities for shooting — he was a first class shot — as well as for sight-seeing, of which he never tired. With his great love of architecture, it distressed him to see the state of neglect into which India's architectural heritage had been allowed to fall — even the Taj Mahal was neglected — and he lost no time in setting on foot a programme of restoration which he personally supervised. His concern was not limited to Hindu and Islamic monuments: he the viceregal court on to the very

taking an interest in British-Indian buildings of the Georgian period.

CURZON was as quick to condemn ill-treatment of the Indians by his fellow-countrymen in India as by the South African whites. He took steps to ensure that when an Englishman assaulted an Indian — an all too frequent occurrence at the beginning of his reign, particularly in the tea-gardens of Assam — the culprit would be brought to justice instead of being let off lightly by a European jury as usually happened. And when he discovered that the officers of the West Kent regiment were guilty of hushing up the systematic rape of an elderly Burmese woman by some of their men, and that men of the 9th Lancers who had beaten an Indian cook to death were likewise being shielded by their officers, his indignation knew no bounds; he ordered the offending regiments to be punished and publicly censured. He was also shocked by the casual attitude of the military authorities to the growing number of fatal accidents to Indians caused by the carelessness of British soldiers out shooting for sport; and dealt with his matter no less sternly. "These cases . . . eat into my very soul" he told Hamilton; and in a minute on the 9th Lancers' outrage, he wrote: "If it be said 'don't wash your dirty linen in public', I reply 'don't ave dirty bran to wash'". Curzon's treatment of the West Kents and the 9th Lancers made him extremely unpopular with the army and caused an outcry among the whole British community. There were repercussions in fashionable circles at home, for the 9th lancers as one of the smartest English cavalry regiments. On the other hand, the Indian vernacular newspapers applauded Curzon's action and likened him to Ripon.

CURZON lived just long enough to see the completion of the great domed edifice of white marble which he bequeathed to Calcutta: the Victoria Memorial Hall. It was his idea; he had raised the money for it as viceroy; intending it to be not only a memorial to the Queen-Empress but a Valhalla of the Raj. To posterity, it has seemed more than anything else like a memorial to Curzon himself, helping to keep his memory alive in an India where he is now largely forgotten except as the restorer of the Taj Mahal and of other monuments.

Excerpts from the Viceroys of India—by Mark Bence-Jones, published by Constable and Co., London, £12.50, Indian price Rs. 221.30 C. Mark Bence-Jones.

BIRJIS QUDEER

"THE LAST KING OF OUDH"

The reign of King Birjis Quder is generally ignored by historians, but there are some interesting facts about his ten-month-old rule during the Mutiny.

By H. S. Bedi

IN the period of Indian history which we are now proud to recall as 'The First War of Independence', there remained only two centres of the fading glory of Muslim rule in India. The old Empire at Delhi was popular for its tradition, majesty and the unpretentious nature of its last ruler Bahadur Shah. The other popular kingdom of a somewhat different type of Muslims was Oudh. According to historian Sharar, 'the specimen of Eastern culture in India'. However, the expansionist policy of the British Indian Empire culminated in deposition of Wajid Ali Shah, the King of Oudh in 1856. Sharar says that if the King so liked the great 'Mutiny' could have taken place earlier. If in 1857 Wajid Ali Shah were in Lucknow the people would undoubtedly have chosen him as their leader. And perhaps he would have met the same fate as the King of Delhi. In his absence and absence, the people of Oudh and leaders of the movement of 1857 put his minor son Prince Birjis Quder on the Throne of Oudh. Prince Birjis was the eldest surviving son of the ex-King Wajid Ali Shah born of his first wife Queen Hazrat Mahal (1857-Pictorial by G.O.I.).

The reign of King Birjis Quder starts with the Movement of 1857 and ends with it in 1858. Nevertheless this ten-month-old reign was a fait accompli which the pro-British historians have tried in vain to ignore. The reign of this last King of Oudh stands all the tests and scrutiny laid down for a lawful rule. As we shall soon see Birjis Quder was popularly crowned, his orders and proclamations were scrupulously obeyed, coins were issued in his name, he duly received revenues and taxes, and was even acknowledged and recognised King by the neighbouring lawless and ancient Empire at Delhi and by other Indian potentates like Nana Rao of the Marathas, Gen. Bakht Khan of Rohilkund, and Firuz Shah. In exile, King Birjis received all hospitality and honours due to royalty from the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal though they were then allies of the British in the war of 1857. The reasons why the British or pro-British elements ignored the rule of Birjis Quder is understandable, as it undermined British authority and prestige in India. In order to make an estimate of the reign of Birjis Qu-

der we must go deeper into the history of that period.

The founder of the dynasty of Oudh was Mir Saadat Khan, a Persian Prince, who in 1720 finally subdued the revolting Jagirdars of Oudh. His successor and son-in-law Abdul Mansur Khan Saifdar Jung (by whose name goes the now famous airport at Delhi) in appreciation of his further services to the Moghul Empire in thwarting the conspiracies of the Syed brothers, was awarded the hereditary Viceregency of Agra & Oudh. This was the reason why the rulers of Oudh were called Nawab Vezirs. Although the rulers of Oudh were virtually independent in their realm, their vasalage to the Empire at Delhi had continued.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In 1819, however, when the Moghul Empire was on its deathbed, his father before his death, Ghaziuddin Haider, at the instigation of the Company's Governor-General Earl of Moira (Lord Hastings) declared his own independent Kingdom of Oudh. With his last revenue to the Court at Delhi, this Ruler of Oudh sent a gold coin engraved with the following couplet in Persian:

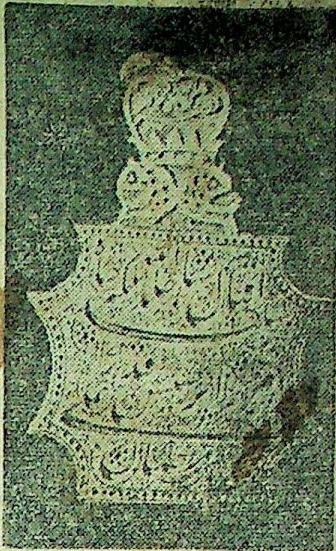
"Sikka zad bur seem-oza az juzle rubbe al-nunun
Ghaziuddin Haidare aali nasab Shah-e-zaman."

Which means: "Ghaziuddin Haider of noble descent and King of the time has by the grace of God issued coins in gold and silver." Since the failing strength of the Moghul Empire could not punish this treachery by force of arms, Emperor Akbar II had to content himself by sending back a gold coin with the under-mentioned inscription:

"Sikka zad dur jehan ze jour-e-fatak
Ghaziuddin Shah haram-e-namak."

meaning: "By the violence of fortune coins have been issued by King Ghaziuddin, who was not true to his sat." This newly-founded kingdom hardly lasted thirty-six years. The short game that the British diplomacy played in India ended in the deposition of the fifth King Wajid Ali Shah in 1856 and vesting of the kingdom of Oudh with the East India Company. Thus the kingdom under British suzerainty proved to be worse than the Viceroyalty under the Moghul Crown.

The people of Oudh for one did not accept the change-over idly. King Wajid Ali Shah's rule, with all its much publicised failings, was very much popular with his subjects. The populace rose together in revolt. S. N. Sen writes, "In Oudh, however, the revolt assumed a national dimension. The feudal lords of Oudh summoned their tenants not only in the name of religion but also in the name of their king. Their king had been unjustly deposed, their country forcibly annexed, and they had not only political grievances to redress but a moral wrong to undo." On



Birjis Quder's "Seal of Title" granted to him by Emperor Bahadur Shah.

owned Mouli of Fyzabad, put on the Throne of Oudh unanimously by the civil and military leaders with the backing of the Hindu and Muslim population of the land. Barkat Ahmed, after the great victory of Chitpore, placed the Crown on the young king's head. Tomias, Man Singh, Jia Lal and Birji Madho, all the later heroes of 1857 were among the leading nobility in support of the coronation. Prince Birjis only qualification in the throne was that he was then the eldest son of ex-King Wajid Ali in Lucknow and had deputised for his father before this.

(Tilism Lucknow, v. Lno, 22 dt. 19.12.1886). On the next morning 21 July 1857, the following Proclamation was promulgated throughout the kingdom: "Populace of God, country of the Emperor of Delhi, Rule of Birjis Quder." (Kaiserut Tawaat v. 2, p. 227). After thirty-four years this was the first time Lucknow remembered the Imperial Throne. At the time of coronation King Birjis pledged to petition the Emperor at Delhi, who was given the option of making the young Ruler his Viceroy or letting him remain King. (Kaiserut v. 2, p. 227). The news of the coronation of Birjis Quder had already been sent to Emperor Bahadur Shah, whose approval was also received on 6th Zil Hijja 1273 Hijri. A few days later, on 23rd Zil Hijja, the following letter was written by Birjis Quder to Bahadur Shah, Revered One!

This humble self has unremittingly annihilated the wretched unbelievers. Few still remain in the Bailey Guard, who will soon be exterminated. I expect by Your Imperial generosity the same kindness which was accorded my ancestors. Some humble presents though not befitting enough are sent herewith with the petition for the Imperial servants. If accepted it will be a great honour."

(Kaiserut v. 2, pp. 239-41).

With this communication and presents Ambassador Abbas Mirza reached Delhi on 28th Moharrum 1274 AH. He was accorded a mammoth welcome at the capital. The chord of unity that was broken by King Ghaziuddin Haider in 1819 was now rejoined by the young King Birjis Quder. Emperor Bahadur Shah gave a private audience to the Ambassador of Oudh, accepted the presents, heard the story and wrote on the same letter the following message, "Dutiful son Birjis Quder, Bahadur King of Oudh, praise be to you that in so young an age you have performed great deeds. The Seal of Title will be sent you later. Assured that you will be given greater territories than you

honoured with the title of Safeerud Dowla, and his Imperial Majesty added, "He (Birjis Quder) is my son, I do grant him the crown" (Kaiserut v. 2, p. 241). The promised Seal of Title was also sent soon after.

This Crown, granted lawfully by the Emperor to King Birjis Quder was different from that worn by his ancestors the other Kings of Oudh. This was not the Crown which, according to Malka Kishwar, mother of King Wajid Ali, was granted by the British (History of Oudh by Najmul Ghani v. 5, p. 257). Nor was it the Crown described by Wajid Ali Shah himself in his poem Huzn-e-Akhtar as:

"Rekhoonga mai khud qesh-e
Malka ye To Uahi ka hai
boksha hua mujhko Raj"
meaning, "I will myself place this Crown before the Queen (Victoria) as it was she who really granted me the kingdom." When Wajid Ali Shah sent another son to England to try for restoration of his kingdom, he wrote in another of his well-known poems named Aain-e-Akhbar:

"Tumhe kash Raj Victoria
Tu goya phu usne mujhi ko
deya"
meaning, "How I wished Victoria granted the Crown even to you; I'll then consider she has again given it to me." King Birjis' Crown was lawfully obtained and popularly retained with dignity, so long as he had the strength to retain.

Birjis Quder ruled uninterruptedly until 14th March 1858 when the British forces under Generals Lavellock and Outram conquered the Kingdom of Oudh for the first time. Thereupon King Birjis along with his famous mother Begum Hazrat Mahal, the Queen Regent, after an adventurous journey sought and was given asylum in Nepal by its ruler. After military defeat King Birjis scorned at several British overtures to the throne."

return under the suzerainty of Queen Victoria. From exile in order to counter the British Queen's Proclamation of 1858, the last King of Oudh issued his last Proclamation to his subjects which inter alia read:

".....These are old affairs, but recently in defiance of Treaties and Oaths and notwithstanding that they owed us millions of rupees, without reason and on pretence of mis-government and discontent of our people, they (British) took our country and property worth millions of rupees. If our people were discontented with our royal predecessor Wajid Ali Shah how come they are content with us. No ruler ever experienced such loyalty and devotion of men and goods as we have done." (vide S. N. Sen's '1857' for reign of Birjis Quder from Coronation to exile.)

In 1891 however, Birjis Quder for the first time returned to India from exile in Nepal. The reason for his return is obscure, but it is evident he had not yet reconciled himself to the loss of his kingdom. It is known that in exile he retained a large number of soldiers with a view to attempt recovering Oudh. In his short stay in Calcutta, it is said, Birjis Quder was yet secretly hoping and planning for another revolt against the British. But times had changed and in Calcutta he found the English at the zenith of their glory. On 14th August in 1893 King Birjis was invited to dinner by one jealous relative, a British stooge, and was assassinated by poison along with two of his children and three friends. The Last King of Oudh was next unceremoniously buried in the Mausoleum of his father ex-King Wajid Ali Shah in the outskirts of Calcutta. And so, according to historian Sharar, "India lost the last man who had ever donned the crown and graced

Romesh Chunder Dutt

Product Of The 19th Renaissance In India

ROMESH Chunder Dutt, born August 13, 1848, was one of the typical products of the 19th Century Renaissance in India. He combined his extraordinary qualities of head and heart with imagination, vigour and vast industry; and he brought all these rich gifts to the service of his motherland. When we consider the peculiarity of Dutt's position as a civil servant we wonder all the more at his ideals and daring achievements. He had truly imbibed the spirit of his masters—Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Born in a large and well-known family of Calcutta, well-known for long for traditions of learning and culture, Romesh lost his mother at 11 and father at 13. His uncle Soshee Chunder Dutt was a man-of-letters whose essays in English were favourably noticed in some literary circles of England around the middle of the last century. Romesh was brought up under the care of this uncle.

After passing his Entrance and First Arts examinations he sailed, when he had not completed 20, for England with two young friends, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Behari Lal Gupta, to sit for the I.C.S. examination. Surendra Nath had his father's permission; but both Romesh and Behari Lal slipped from their homes under cover of night, lest their guardians might prevent their crossing the seas, which meant losing caste. All the three passed into the Service, Romesh standing second in order of merit.

On his return from England, he joined the Civil Service, gradually rising to become a Divisional Commissioner. His efficiency and success as an administrator were acknowledged in glowing terms as much by the authorities as by his countrymen. He voluntarily retired in 1897, nine years earlier than his due time, in order to serve his country and his 'first love', literature, more freely and assiduously. After retirement, he for some time lectured on Indian

History at the London University College. While in the Service, and out of it, he turned out works of abiding value for his countrymen. He presided over the Congress session of 1899. He was one of the top leaders of the country, and a strong nationalist. At the Gaekwar's special request, he served the Baroda State as its Revenue Minister from 1904 to 1907. In 1907-08 he did valuable work as the only Indian member of the Decentralization Commission. The Gaekwar took him away again, now as his Prime Minister, on June 1, 1909. On November 30, the same year, Dutt died, mourned by his countless friends and admirers in India and abroad.

As an administrator, Romesh Chunder displayed exemplary efficiency, as well as imagination, tact, strong and effective sympathy for the people, particularly the suffering peasantry and labouring class, and firm adherence to duty at all cost. He was the first Indian to become a District Magistrate and a Divisional Commissioner. His work earned the praise of all. Once, "as a crowning mark of official goody", the Viceroy himself sent for Dutt, and at a personal interview the Marquess of Ripon expressed his high approval of Dutt's work in a difficult district and during a time of great tension of race feeling. "I sent for you", Lord Ripon said, "as I wished to see you and know you, before leaving India. Your work should be known in England; the fitness of Indians for high administrative posts would not then be questioned".

The most remarkable thing about Romesh Chunder as an administrator was that he combined his outstanding efficiency with astonishing independence. In 1875, when he was a very young officer in the Service, he brought out a book, *Bengal Peasantry*, with the avowed intention of publicizing the grievances of the long-suffering peasants oppressed by the zamindars. The landed aristocracy were scared, and ridiculed the new leader. But Romesh Chunder Dutt's loss was not felt in the political field alone: it was felt in the several walks of Indian life which he had enriched by his contributions.

British India (1902). His *Ancient India* pre-eminently fulfilled the purpose he had set forth in the preface—namely, to present a critical and careful account of this country's past history, and thereby to replace an unreasoning and superstitious worship of the past by a legitimate and manly admiration, so vital to forming a nation's mind and character. His translation of the Indian Epics acquainted the Western world, in an eminently readable form, with the richest treasure-house of our ancient culture. His *Economic History* is a schol-

(Continued on back page, col. 4)

the young Indian Civilian as a 'revolutionary' and a 'radical'. The authorities, too, were not very happy at the unorthodox opinions of a Civil Servant; but Dutt felt he had done the right thing for his suffering fellow-men. The book led to a public agitation for inquiry into the long-neglected grievances of the peasantry, and ultimately forced the Government to pass the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1885. In a bold letter to The Statesman in 1882, Dutt strongly criticized the bureaucratic mentality and career of the retiring Lt. Governor Sir Ashley Eden, closing with these memorable words—"His personal rule, his attempts to crush a young press, however wayward, his efforts to stamp out the young aspirations of Bengal—will all vanish with him... The ear of progress will march onwards, and year after year our legitimate aspirations will increase, and Young Indian obtain an ever-increasing share in the government of the country". Dutt had not completed 11 years in the Covenanted Service when he wrote this in

By

Dr. A. N. Chatterjee

public. It was at Baroda that he could work more freely and effectively, first as Revenue Minister and later as Prime Minister. He endeared himself to the people as one of their own, and was lovingly called 'Garib ka Dost' (Friend of the poor). By introducing far-reaching reforms, he modernized the Baroda administration.

Romesh Chunder Dutt's success and popularity as an administrator were mainly due to the rich human qualities that he brought to bear on his work. His energy was as inexhaustive as his imagination was wide-ranging. He combined his abundant vigour for all beneficial work with a 'severe classical genial spirits, which did not

HOME-MADE ARMOURY

ough the proverb
man behind the
is important, the
itself is no less so.

Admiral
Chatterji (Retd.)

COUNTRY can safeguard its security only if it has therewithal to meet the threats that may from time to time arise to its territorial integrity, and as recent events elsewhere have brought into the unity and its institutions the nature, intensity and direction of such threats at any time is dependent on several factors some of which may be internal and some of external. Internal as well as external factors could act to reinforce one another and so aggravate the threat at a given point or conversely interact so as to reduce the magnitude of threat to a nation's security. In general analysis, in order to count all the threats that may develop, a country must have adequate forces.

The need for maintaining trained forces of adequate size and composition is generally agreed in the Country the need being the forces properly and their implications on national economy, industry and technological development and indeed on the term security and well-being of the country do not seem to have been given due consideration. The book under review, Col. Rama Rao rightly stresses the significance of these factors. After all, armed forces can only be as good as the weapons, equipment and supporting systems available to them. Although the proverb "man behind the gun" is important, the gun itself is not less important. Good and effective guns in the hands of well-trained and well-led troops will prevail against troops which are not well trained and led or those who may be ill-led. Thus weapons, using this term in a comprehensive sense, are of vital importance in guarding national security.

The subject of armament sales, strategic and economic considerations underlying armament production, sales and transfers by means of loans or gifts has been discussed in fair detail in the book. A comprehensive study of armament production, its role in promoting national self-reliance, technological growth and safeguarding security in the Indian context was not hitherto available. This lacuna has been now filled by Col. Rama Rao's book.

The book discusses the various elements that strengthen national security and points out that a country that is dependent on external sources for vitally needed articles such as food or other may discover that those providing critically needed supplies or aid may use the latter as levers to coerce the recipient country.

Dependence on external sources for armaments is even more risky. The arms market is a sellers' market by and large. Arms are manufactured mostly by the super powers and other industrialised countries. The super powers' arms race spurs technological advancement in armament design and production with the result that each generation of a particular type of weapon is far more lethal and powerful than the one it replaces and correspondingly more expensive. In general, weapons incorporating "state of the art" technology are reserved by the great powers for issue to their own troops and their close allies. In some special cases such as American sales to affluent oil producers, the considerations are economic as well as strategic. Arms sales by US to India for example are severely restricted.

ed since a somewhat vulnerable India may be considered to serve the arms producers' regional interests best.

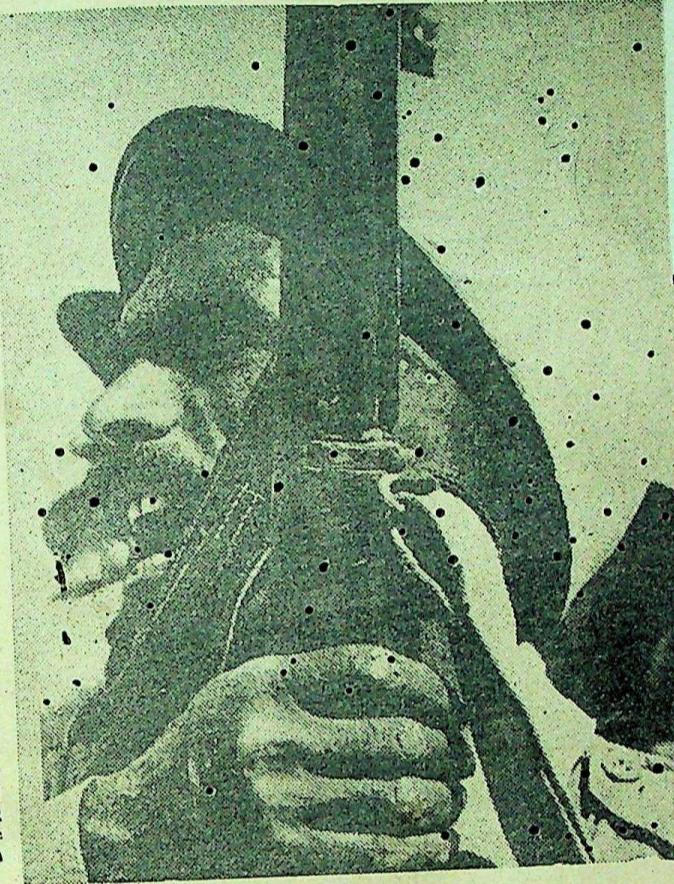
Lesser powers such as France, Britain, Italy and West Germany sell arms mainly to further their economic interests, since armaments their foreign exchange earnings and to a great extent helps recover weapon development costs.

The technological fallout from armament research and production can be considerable. Since armament production calls for competence in precision engineering and processing of special alloys and composite materials, several sectors of national industry would have opportunities to induce new technologies and their products could become more competitive in world markets.

In India's case all these con-

are serious gaps. It is vital that these gaps are covered with the least delay. In particular, we still rely on the import of some expensive types of combat aircraft, helicopters and even light transport aircraft. Likewise we are not yet fully self-reliant in designing and producing certain types of ships, tanks and self-propelled guns which are expensive.

In the matter of naval equipment, much has been achieved already. Frigates and smaller craft are produced locally. Beginning is being made to build underwater craft. But very much more remains to be done. Our principle must be to make locally as many types of ships and other items of defence equipment as possible and in the quantities we need. In cases where we need only a small number of a parti-



5

mix will ultimately affect one's thought and attitudes. One's guess; and meanwhile no quality popularisation is creative and entertaining. In an experiment aggressively refuses to conform to the textbook conception of communism is supposed

are Americans, even to write, so tiresomely with the cult of toughness in perpetual need something to themselves denning their obsession and in the process attitudes that are alter- omic and offputting? Mailer's *Tough Guys* since (Michael Joseph) confirms the obsession little to explain it or more palatable than it is. He is a writer, and of has to be a drunk, artistically frustrated, with his women and convict. There is something not too old American which says that a desire of every conceivable access instantly acquires

about to find himself in blood and with a murder? The question to which one is not keen to find an answer is no thriller writer

tough guy cultural pre- litters in his narrative mumbo-jumbo. Have are available to others in the town to Mailer him country. Only then would we bear a complete using our resources optimally, tough guy idioms avoid unplanned imports of equipment and technology and prepare the ground for rapid industrial growth. The author has done well in drawing attention to these considerations.

NJN

ARMS AND THE MAN: Weapons play a crucial role in the safeguarding of national security.

considerations are relevant. We have reasonably large sized armed forces. We have been subjected to unprovoked aggression on four occasions from across our western borders and once from across our northern borders. Every time our western neighbour has received armament gifts from us, it has mounted attacks on us. The situation now is, to say the least, far from reassuring. Hence India has to maintain forces of adequate strength and equipment, if not with weapons as

special item such as large or special types of ships, we should endeavour to produce most of the ship's sub-systems including the hull, in our own dockyards.

It is imperative that we make a determined effort to acquire competence in designing, developing and producing high technology and high cost defence equipment. We have to tap fully the potential not only of our ordnance factories and other defence and public sector units but also private sector research and pro-

SELF RELIANCE AND SECURITY : Role Of Defence Production: By Col. R. Rama Rao (Retd.) (Birla Institute Of Scientific Research, Rs. 125).

versatile as those potential aggressors are getting from their patrons, at least with those that can be reasonably effective.

As brought out forcefully in the book, a country that equips its forces with imported weapons, may have to reckon with several undesirable consequences. Foreign arms vendors would create local lobbies and the latter would acquire a vested interest in continuing armament imports to the detriment of the domestic economy, technological development and self-reliance.

India, fortunately, has a fairly extensive defence production and research base. Domestic production of defence items has been steadily going up. We can design and develop most of the items we need. Even so there

duction units and ensure that the know-how and capacities built up or acquired in one unit or sector are available to others in the country. Only then would we bear a complete using our resources optimally, tough guy idioms avoid unplanned imports of equipment and technology and prepare the ground for rapid industrial growth. The author has done well in drawing attention to these considerations.

In the near future nuclear and space technologies would be as relevant for our defence needs as conventional high technology. All these aspects of defence production have been competently discussed in the book under review, which merits the attention of everyone interested in national defence and economic development.

Jinnah's misfortune was that, on the one hand, he was considered a Muslim leader by Gandhi and, on the other, was heckled by the Muslims at a League conference.

by Govind Talwalkar

WHEN asked by Lord Mountbatten for his assessment of Mr Jinnah, Nehru said that the essential thing to remember about Jinnah was that he was a man to whom success had come very late in life when he was over sixty. Before that he was not a major figure in Indian politics. Nehru also accused him of always adopting a negative attitude.

Nehru was wrong. Jinnah did play an important role in Indian politics even before the arrival of Nehru himself on the scene. Motilal Nehru used to introduce Jinnah as a person who showed his community the way to Hindu-Muslim unity. Mrs Sarojini Naidu called him the ambassador

A VOLTE-FACE: The Muslim League resolution of 1940 d
to Indian politics. Jinnah, who once aspired

The lonely road

of Hindu-Muslim unity. Jinnah enjoyed the confidence of Lokmanya Tilak, Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta. He was the principal architect of the Lucknow Pact, to which Tilak was one of the signatories.

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru underestimated Jinnah and the strength of communal appeal. In his new book *Jinnah of Pakistan*, Mr Stanley Wolpert does not emphasise this aspect of Gandhi's politics but it comes out the same. He has had the advantage of access to the archives in Pakistan as well as some personal records. Wolpert has tried to get a satisfactory answer to the question why the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity turned into the founder of Pakistan. The evidence which he gathered and analysed may not provide a satisfactory answer but his efforts to bring out the personal aspects are commendable.

Whatever one may say about the historical process or historical determinism, one cannot ignore the rôle of the individual.

Lennin had not reached St Petersburg in a closed German car, the course of the Russian revolution could have been different. Similarly, while studying the causes which led to the partition of India, we cannot but take account of the personalities of Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah. The Muslim leader mistrusted both Gandhi and Nehru who in turn underestimated Jinnah. Wolpert has brought out this aspect of personality.

get on together right from the beginning. At the time of the first world war, Jinnah, like Tilak, was for responsive co-operation with the British while Gandhi insisted on unconditional support and even took part in the recruitment drive.

In 1915, when the war was going on, Gandhi was felicitated in Bombay by the Gujarati Sabha of which Jinnah was the president. While expressing his gratitude, Gandhi said that he was glad that a Muslim was the president of the Sabha. Wolpert says that this hurt Jinnah as he thought of himself as a national leader. Jinnah's misfortune was that, on the one hand, he was considered a Muslim leader by Gandhi, and on the other, he was heckled by Muslims at a League conference and was asked to speak in Urdu if he was a true Muslim.

After the first world war, Jinnah was a staunch opponent of the notorious Rowlatt Act and wanted the British to protect the interests of the Khilafat. But he was not in favour of the satyagraha advocated by Gandhi who was also espousing the cause of the Ali brothers who were demagogues and whom Jinnah could not tolerate. Jinnah could also not stomach Gandhi's constant religious refrain: while Jinnah's constitutional approach was, according to Gandhi, inadequate to shake the foundation of the empire and hasten

Jinnah was an active member of the Congress, which he could not be if he had always adopted a negative attitude. Outside the assembly the cause of the Khilafat fell through as Kemal himself abolished it. Gandhi's dream of Hindu-Muslim unity was shattered to pieces when serious communal riots broke out in various places, especially so in Malabar.

But again with the appointment of the Simon Commission, Gandhi and Jinnah were together on the same side of the barricade. In Bombay, the boycott of the Commission was successful because of Jinnah and Gandhi congratulated him on his role.

Before the Simon Commission report was out, Jinnah tried out a pact with all parties, including the Congress, and to settle the Muslim share in power, both at the provincial and the central level. If he had succeeded the Muslims could have been in majority in five states and would have one-third of the seats in the Central Legislature. This agreement, however, could not be reached.

Jinnah then corresponded with the then British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and suggested a conference in London. MacDonald was a personal friend of Jinnah. The British government called a round-table conference in which a

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Against the backdrop of the Arctic tundras, dense forests infested with carnivora, and frozen lakes, the horse symbolically rescues companionship and love.

by Shyam Ratna Gupta

HISTORY repeats itself. So does literary fiction. For fiction is essentially social history. It has an imaginary facade but it mirrors the inner reality of society. Radical changes in the political, economic and cultural life-styles of the people alter only marginally the parameters of literary fiction.

One of the popular themes for fiction is the impact of nature on human relations, or the interplay between the earth with its teeming plant, insect and animal life on the one hand and man-woman behaviour patterns on the other.

These generalisations are perhaps more true of new fiction coming from Czechoslovakia, geographically the heartland of Europe. Notwithstanding its rapid strides in industrialisation and technology and its commitment to socialism, in which it is second to none in Eastern Europe, it is close to the soil, and the people respond to the moods of nature as spontaneously as to their familial environment.

This is amply demonstrated by

From

the two works of fiction, translated from the Czech language into English, published recently.

There is an impassioned, full-blooded, emotional and deeply moving narration of human alienation, union and disunion, particularly between couples, in the four stories of Kozak, all of them pregnant with tragic pathos in a triangular dilemma of family ties. In these stories nature is the teacher, a stern though gentle master, which sways man's destiny. Along with animal life in a harsh but hazardous environment, the sentiments of affection and brotherhood, of lust and hatred, of strife and grief, are alternately aroused in the human breast, luring them to perdition or prosperity.

In European folklore the horse is the centre of social life. Not merely does it play a significant part as a beast of burden; it also helps purge man of the base, conditioned, societal and circumstantial codes of behaviour which often set them on a collision course. Against the backdrop of the rigours of land or climate, as in the Arctic tundras, the taiga, dense forests infested with carnivora, and frozen lakes, the horse symbolically rescues companionship and love which, however, die with its death.

An illustration of this human-ecological relationship, of give and take, of friendliness and antagonism, is furnished in *A White Stallion*, easily one of the most touching stories in recent

All Our Arjun

The Gita is an indispensable map for the ascent of man. The colloquy at Kurukshetra can yet liberate humankind.

by Sisirkumar Ghose

A DELIBERATE synthesis, with plenty of nuances, the Gita has meant all things to all men, from non-violence to non-attachment, from holy war to sheer transcendence. In Europe there are more than one hundred and fifty commentaries, in India the number must be much larger. Almost every school of yoga, religion and philosophy finds itself reflected in the extraordinary human-divine dialogue. The basis of right action, in a crisis, was fixed with a range and archetypal authority worthy of a virile, self-conscious, profoundly inner culture. One of the world's greatest classics, it yields an enormous attraction for the thinker and activist alike.

Roughly, there are two schools: the sannyasi enamoured of an autonomous emancipation and the activists, or those who believe in the primacy of duty, but duty with purified motives. For some it is also a paradigm of devotion, even a sanction for the caste system. As Sri Aurobindo points out, by throwing a particular emphasis it is possible to turn it into a partisan of our own dogma

Today our needs are different. To believe Sri Aurobindo, we do not belong to the past dawns but to the noons of the future.

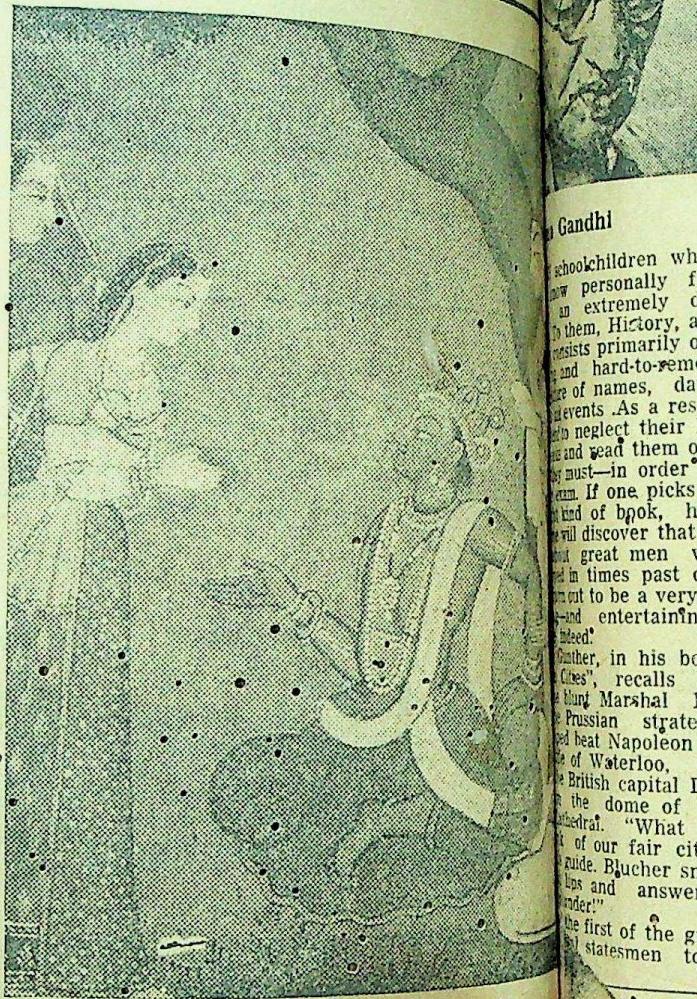
or doctrine. The truth is, however, that the many exegeses, there is very little local or temporal about the Gita. Sri Aurobindo gives it, it is well known, a characteristic, that is the largest, most inclusive interpretation. Even a little of it is enough to save.

The Aurobindonian approach may not be exactly orthodox and he has stated it firmly and clearly more than once. Though not particularly keen on setting up a neat philosophical system, the passion for which has provided ample ammunition for a continuing debate. Today our needs are different. To believe Sri Aurobindo, we do not belong to the past dawns but to the noons of the future. He feels justified in giving the ancient text a wider scope and relevance. As he sees it: "What then is the message of the Gita and its working value, its spiritual utility to the human mind of the present day? The book has worn exceedingly well and in its real substance almost as fresh because renewable, as when it first appeared. An influence for both thought and action, its ideals are actually, at work in

the renewal of a nation and a culture. What gives vitality to the thought and truth of the Gita?" Essays on the Gita gives that answer, to the most difficult of questions: How to live in a crisis?

Poet, hero and futurist, Sri Aurobindo has given an extended meaning to the Everlasting Gospel of the Gita, breathed a new life into the old bones. Though the ground has been prepared carefully—in what was perhaps the first open-air Advanced Centre of Philosophy not known to

In the battle of ears
are bidden above the consciousness
other law of being
living through
surrender to the will.



THE DIVINE TEACHER: Krishna listening to the villagers. Pahari School, Nurpur, 1770-80.

the UGC—the meaning and the mystery emerge unmistakably in the closing chapters, after the epiphany. Logic and magic blend into an artistic whole. In the battle of life, whose other name is Dharmakshetra Kurukshetra, we are bidden to rise above the ordinary consciousness into another law of being and living, through a total surrender to the divine will or person. Eloquent

last word, Sri Aurobindo, not fail to point out, if we meet the modern demands of collective life and advanced apart, inexhaustible map of antique India, the Gita is a dispensable map for the man. Reflecting the divine Stays. The colloquy at Kurukshetra, he had written down, is yet liberate mankind.

Essays On The Gita : By Sri Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Rs. 35)

with immortal insights, Sri Aurobindo's Essays on the Gita is a vivid re-play of a moral or, as we like to say today, an existential dilemma, throbbing with a prophet's ageless vision. This livingness is perhaps its most distinguishing feature, a proof of the power of the Word.

The Gita is of course not the

grieve; I shall deliver you from every sin and sorrow. Where is his Animal?

A cheaper, popular edition of this "reduced" book is most welcome. There is a page, however, in every page, including

Jun story without

In the battle
are bidden
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Gandhi

schoolchildren whom now personally find an extremely dull To them, History, as a consists primarily of a and hard-to-remem- cre of names, dates, events. As a result, neglect their his- and read them only must—in order to them. If one picks up kind of book, how will discover that real great men who in times past can out to be a very in- and entertaining— indeed!

Gautier, in his book: 'Lies', recalls the King Marshal Blücher Prussian strategist beat Napoleon at Waterloo, was British capital London dome of St. cathedral. "What do our fair city?" guide Blücher smacked and answered: "Under!" the first of the great statesmen to be



Sir Winston Churchill

and diplomacy was presented by this Albert, King of the Belgians, one day on the eve of the outbreak of World War One. He was entertaining a powerful African chieftain from the Belgian Congo at his palace, and after dinner, at a signal, the royal orchestra filed into the hall, and began tuning their instruments.

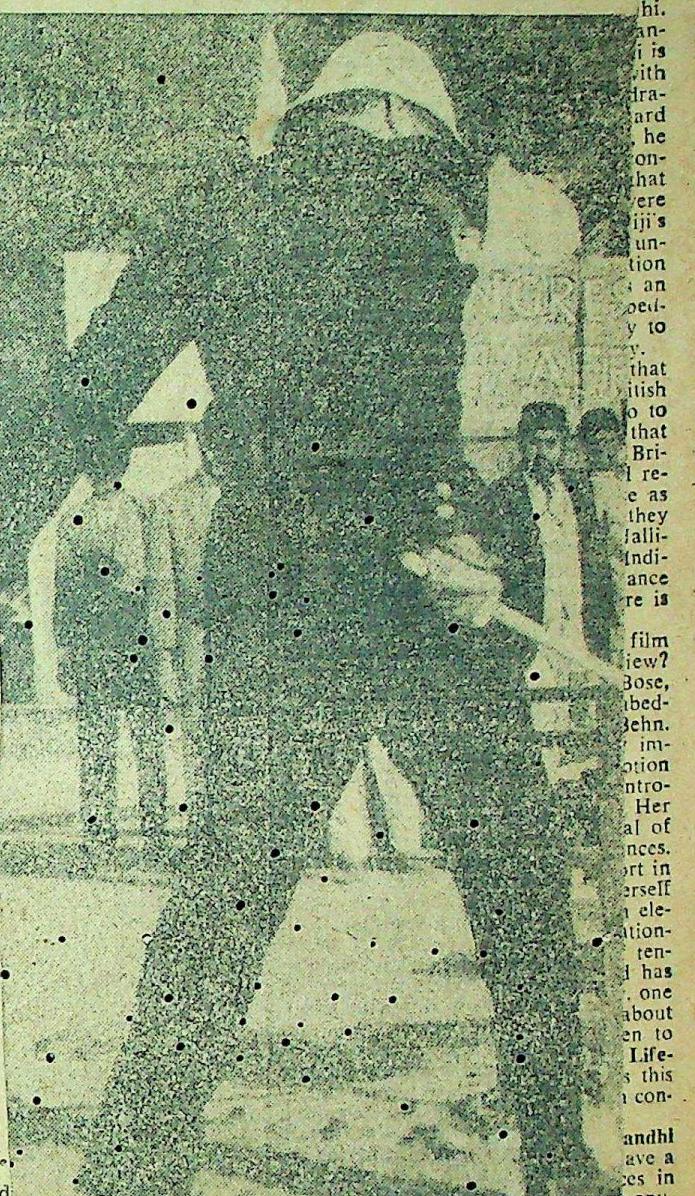
"Tell me the kind of music you like best—and my orchestra will be happy to oblige," said King Albert. "That's time, of devotion and ship. Seeing the movie is to the chieftain now."

curacies, some of them deliberate. Some distortions are inevitable in reducing a vast canvas to a man-

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irked by what he termed "the outrageous way I am misquoted by irresponsible rumour-mongering journalists" was Otto von Bismarck, iron-willed Chancellor of Germany from 1871 to 1890. London's top foreign correspondent at the time was W.H. Russell of the "Times" newspaper, and he reminded Bismarck one day "You'll have to admit that am one newspaper man who has respected your confidence. You have conversed with me on all sorts of subjects and never once have I repeated a word you said." Bismarck cried angrily: "The more fool you! Do you suppose I'd ever say word to a man in your profession that I didn't want to see in print?"

Not many Indians know of Albert, King of the Belgians in the early part of this century. A prize example of tac-



FIGHTING FOR THE INDIANS IN SOUTH

the organisational skills into its making. Ben Gandhiji is as near as it to look like the real life does not provide duplicates or replicas personalities. Even so help observing that all leaders shown in the than. Gandhiji, seem In real-life Gandhiji, dwarfed the giants

around him. Sir Richard's Gandhiji reduces them to nonentities. This observation is especially true of Jinnah. Also there is nothing in the film to suggest how a warm friendly nationalist was transformed into an aloof and forbidding figure.

Sir Richard has claimed that his Gandhi is not meant to be a record of the freedom struggle. There are chronological and other inac-

used to as a character epics. There are many dimensions to Gandhiji. The success of Sir Richard is that he has not attempted the impossible. His Gandhi is possible.

geable size. But it is difficult to understand how he could fail to depict the Quit India movement and

last word. Sri Aurobindo

not fail to point out a collective life and apart, inexhaustible yet

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grieve; I shall suffer every sin and Divine Teacher (XVII) where is his Aurobindo

A cheaper, larger of this "reduced, refined in every page, in

35 Years Later

As we observe the 35th anniversary of Gandhiji's martyrdom, we can do so only with a heavy heart. For, the great cause for which he laid down his life has not been realised. Hindus and Muslims have not come together as members of one extended family. Indeed, occasionally the trouble makers among the two communities manage to incite them and they behave as if Gandhiji had never been born and had not worked his miracles amongst us. Meerut and Baroda are a blot on us which we should do all we can in our power to remove. The Mahatma would have staked everything on this effort. That was the meaning of his life to which his martyrdom was a fitting culmination.

For all those Indians who lived in the period when Gandhiji led the epic struggle for independence, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of the disgrace of untouchability from the face of the Hindu society, and economic and social justice for the poor and the wretched, it is still difficult to recall his martyrdom without pain and anger. Attenborough's *Gandhi*, which opens and closes with the infamous shots, will, as it were, reopen the wound. This is as well. The wound needs to be reopened. It has not healed properly. A cyst has formed under the skin.

Thirty-five years are, of course, a short period in a country's life. It is not easy to dispose of a difficult legacy such as the Hindu-Muslim problem in such a short time. And it cannot be anybody's case that India has not made impressive progress towards the objective of communal understanding and harmony. In fact, the clashes that we now witness are often not so much the result of a conflict of faiths and observances as of economic competition which is unavoidable in a modernising and changing society where every individual and group is seeking upward mobility. That a substantial and a largely new middle class among Muslims should have come up after partition and should now be competing with the others is a tribute to Indian secularism. Just as we are witnessing a new assertiveness among the Harijans, so we are among the Muslims. Both are products of the same fact — a growing political consciousness and awareness not only of their rights but also of their power. Thus, all in all, there is no reason to take a pessimistic view of developments since independence. But for the land of the Mahatma, this progress is not good enough. We have to reach a stage where it is not possible even for mischief-makers to mix religion with either politics or economics.

There is, however, another aspect of this problem which should not be ignored. To blow up clashes limited to one or two towns into a national crisis is to spread pessimism, panic and aggressiveness and thus to defeat the very objective we wish to achieve. It does not follow that we should not publicise the nasty events and expose the criminals out to fan the flames of hatred for their own ends. But it does follow that we handle these things with care and not rush to general conclusions from particular incidents, however sad and deplorable. Many of us have a strong tendency to do so. If the communalists overdraw the picture because they are disposed to view events through the communal prism, so do some of the secularists. They perhaps feel morally superior in the act of patronising and condemning. Such basic weak characters cannot carry forward the Mahatma's message.

Letters

You are welcome to the four o'clock show but make sure that you start queuing up by two."

The cheerfulness with which the disappointed and drenched crowd dispersed was remarkable; most people declaring that they would be back after a spot of lunch.

A tall, broad-shouldered man ahead of my wife and me said he had failed to get tickets for Gandhi three but would happily come back to join the line for the next show, which was more than we were prepared to do.

He also volunteered the information that he ran a private taxi and that everybody but everybody who had got into his vehicle had praised Gandhi to the skies and had advised him not to miss it at any cost.

It seemed to me that the whole of New York had received the

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The Raj Is Now



A PALACE COMES ALIVE: On location at Umaid Bhawan, Jodhpur.

every room in the palace. Its portraits have a way of doing things they look straight at anyone who stops to stare. Under the piercing gaze of late Maharaja Hanumant Singh sits Trevor Howard in a deep green velvet chair. He brings back to mind Captain Bligh of *Mutiny on the Bounty* and seafilled images of Ryan's Daughter. He has a ruddy pink face and soft blue eyes like that of a man who has lived fully and is aging gently.

In another room, in front of another portrait which records the royal faces in a family tree, is Christopher Lee — described as "the gaunt British actor whose personality lends itself to sinister and horrific parts." He has played most of the known monsters in films such as *The Curse of Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *The Mummy*. He wrote an autobiography which he titled *Tall, Dark and Gruesome*. In the *Bengal Lancers* he plays the formidable corrupt official the kind that exist everywhere. Lee's voice is deep and sure. As is his manner. His voice reveals a

tone of confidence that borders on pomposity. He has more words than Trevor Howard. He has an answer to every question. Neither of them though give answers that illuminate. Their placid responses reveal an attitude which is indicative of an English mind groomed by a lost empire.

Striking another note is Miles O'Keefe, the American actor best known for his role in *Tarzan the Ape-Man*. Tall and well-boned he projects a temperament that is reticent but poised. Victor Kosy who plays a sergeant in the ballroom scene hails from Glasgow. He was once an actor. Now he plays in rock bands on the beaches of Malaga in Spain. Having read Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, he came searching for spiritual India. Wherever he travelled there were conferences and festivals. He came running to little-known Jodhpur only to find himself grabbed by a film company to play a soldier. He gave up his spiritual search for a day to get dressed in a uniform and

dance with a lady in a lilac gown. Away from them all, seated in the muted splendour of an ancestral room is Gaj-Singhji who remains for Umaid Bhawan and Jodhpur "the durbar". Young and quietly exuberant he speaks with ease, with a quiet humour and a foresight rarely visible among the vanishing princes of India. Through the fragments of conversation emerges a feeling that seems in a flux — a feeling that points to a condition that is unsettled, that is changing and is inevitable.

Anees Jung: I overheard a comment of one of your colleagues, David Garrett, who years ago had come to India to photograph *Nine Hours to Rama*. When asked why the raj is the rage in the West now, he said: "There never was a raj. It only existed in the minds of the British."

Christopher Lee: Raj the rage is a good pun. It probably is. There are so many marvelous stories in the history of India which have never been shown on the screen, at least in the English language in the West. Film

Sayad for merger of Sind with India

By ANAND K. SAHAY

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI, July 5:

"SIND should merge with India if independence itself is not possible, and the merger should only be in relation to defence, foreign affairs and currency," said Mr G.M. Sayad, the veteran Sindhi nationalist leader and founder of the "Jiye Sindh" movement in an interview today.

Mr Sayad describes Jiye Sindh as a freedom movement and is chagrined that India, which supports the cause of Palestine and of the blacks of South Africa has not shewn the "courage" to recognise and endorse the movement of the people of Sind.

"After partition we became a colony of (Pakistan) Punjab," he asserted with motion.

These words could be high rhetoric coming for a politician but at 84 Mr Sayad is too old for that. He is also the one who proposed the Pakistan resolution in the Sind provincial assembly in 1943 as a Muslim League member. But not very much later Mr Sayad ended his six-year old association with the League when he found that "Jinnah was playing in the hands of the British".

At his age the Sindhi leader is bird-like but his expression hardens and teeth clench when he talks of Mr Jinnah. "He was so dis-

contents declassified by the British government under the 30-year rule.

When the Muslim League adopted the then viceroy-appointed Sir Zafarullah Plan, the British became assured they could depend on the League in promoting their policies and in its facig up the Congress, Mr Wali Khan surmises.

Discussing the British tilt towards the Muslim League, he pointed out that the British decided that it might not be a

honest and corrupt, and served as the tool of the British empire", Mr Sayad says forcefully.

Denouncing the two-nation theory as being against Islam, the octogenarian leader talks about his profound unhappiness with the decision to support the concept of Pakistan even if only in the early stage and admits, "realisation came too late. I revolted against the idea when it became clear it was against Islam, against Muslims and meant entirely for the benefit of the British empire".

Though at the time a member of the Muslim League working committee, Mr Sayad opposed the resolution moved by Mr Jinnah which dubbed the Quit India Movement of 1942 as being anti-Muslim. Just before partition he left the League and formed his own United Party of Sind which went into coalition with the Congress. For his forceful espousal of the cause of the separation of Sind from Pakistan, he has been placed under continuous detention since 1958. In fact, he has been able to come here as he was granted parole for the trip.

It is an irony that Mr Sayad is visiting India to see the ailing Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. They are not allowed to meet in Pakistan. Mr Sayad has not been permitted to visit Peshawar, where Badshah Khan lives, since 1956, which is about the same time that he last visited this country. He is not sure—because memory plays tricks—whether he was here last in 1952 or 1954 but he remembers it was on his way back from China that he visited Bombay.

cast himself in the role of god-father who issued instruction from behind, Mr Wali Khan writes.

The Englishman's game was to get the Muslim come together in a sort of confrontation with the Congress and make it appear to the world that the Indians were fighting among themselves, so what could he do, the book says.

During the first round-table conference, the British made full use of the communal differences. When the second round table was called, the strategy was pursued to further limits.

The author points out that Harijans were also similarly sought to be involved in casteist issues and alienated from the Congress to further weaken the Hindus. It would give the British great joy if like the princes, the Harijan also fell into their hands.

An excited secretary of state for India wrote on December 8, 1932, "Ambedkar has behaved well at the roundtable conference and I am most anxious to strengthen his hands in every reasonable way."

But Mahatma Gandhi foiled the British gambit by going on a hunger strike, demanding a rightful place for the Harijans in the Hindu society, according to Mr

"Those who have inherited nationhood for 5,000 years should not be crushed and made helpless like this," he says feelingly.

Mr Sayad's visit is entirely private. He only comes to see the ailing Badshah Khan and says he will not ask for a meeting with government or political leaders. But there is little denying that the trip has acquired an automatic political edge. This is the first time ever that the Jiye Sind movement has sent out its leader to seek support only. Mr Sayad agrees with this formulation. He has been felicitated by several Sindhi organisations both in Bombay (where he first landed) and here. His message to Indian Sindhis he says, is "I am glad you have riches. But this is not enough. You have to unite and build public pressure. Otherwise, no one will help us. The Bengalees were able to get their rights because Bengalees everywhere built up pressure".

Mr Sayad's meeting with Badshah Khan is yet to happen. With Gandhi's successor battling for life in hospital the Sindhi stalwart is praying hard for his recovery. Khan Badshah is the only one who can talk to both India and Pakistan and seek them to come to an understanding so that we the minorities in Pakistan, can get our rights. If does not happen, only an India-Pakistan war would give us the chance to break loose, much as the second world war gave India the chance to free itself from the British", says the Sindhi nationalist.

Mr Sayad was in the Congress before his brief interlude in the Muslim League practically. I never left the Congress, and kept in touch with Nehru even when I was in the League, he says.

In a sense, after the 97-year-old Badshah Khan, he is the senior-most Congress leader in the sub-continent today held positions of influence before 1947. Fondly he recalls the name of Nehru, Patel, Maulana Azad, Pt. Pant, Asaf Ali, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Mridula Sarabhai among his friends 'Gandhiji' he says was our

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BOMBAY, July 6: Mr Vasantrao Patil, governor of Rajasthan yesterday refused to comment on the current political situation in the state. His only reply to various queries was "wait till the presidential election is over".

Mr Patil's visit to the city had evoked considerable political speculation. However, so far he has meticulously abstained from any political activity.

He attended a function at Vile Parle (West) yesterday and left for Pune in the evening.

British, but the then viceroy was able to assure London that Mr Jinnah had refused to attend a meeting called by the Congress for the purpose and both he and Mr Liaquat Ali Khan had refused to join such a government.

The British were thus able to smoothly pass on the responsibility of all their cunning, dishonesty, deceit, injustice and high-handedness to the Muslim League. "The Muslim League leaders were happy and proud in wearing and owning this crown of British infamy", Mr Wali Khan says.

Excerpts from his forthcoming book were recently published in the Peshawar-based Frontier Post, an English-language daily.



